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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A VINDICTIVE WOMAN.]

SINNED AGAINST: NOT SINNING.

CHAPTER VI.

For my heart was hot and restless,
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Was greater than I could bear.

LONGFELLOW.

"I SHALL leave you to think over the matter," said Lady Pendleton, with a malignant leer upon her wicked old face, as she gathered up her fan, scent-bottle, and the gorgeous Indian shawl she had thrown around her shoulders, and prepared to leave the room.

"Stay!"

The exclamation came from Everil, and the girl's voice sounded strangely harsh and imperious, as she drew herself to her full height and confronted her grandmother.

The old woman looked at Everil with actually some perturbation visible on her countenance. Her granddaughter had never before spoken to her in such a tone, and Lady Pendleton was—to put the matter in its mildest form—almost overcome with amazement. But she was too wary to show this, and with a forced laugh, said:

"Hey-day! madame! What's the meaning of those tragedy-queen airs? I think you forget who I am, and who you are!"

"You have come to the point, Lady Pendleton," Everil spoke the name with an effort. "I do not forget who you are, and, in considera-

tion of the assertion you have just made, I want to know who I am."

"Everil Vane," said the old woman, colouring through her rouge, whilst her voice trembled with suppressed passion, for seventeen years I have sheltered you, educated you, and clothed you, although my soul loathed you. The disclosure I am about to make I did not withhold so long from any fear of sparing your feelings, but simply because the time was not ripe for me to say anything upon the subject. I had always intended using it as an instrument to force you into obedience did you dare to disobey me. The occasion has come and I use my weapon!"

Exhausted by her rage the old woman sank back again upon the sofa.

Everil, with a face like marble, and a dazed, wild look in her sweet eyes, stood yet before her.

"Proceed," said the girl, in a cold, firm tone, contrasting curiously with the ungovernable rage of the old woman.

"Then you are anxious to know your shame?" queried Lady Pendleton, insolently and tantalisingly.

"I wish to know the worst," replied Everil, still firm and dignified in her tones and demeanour. "I wish to know the secret in your possession, which you say concerns me."

"Give me time," said Lady Pendleton, leisurely inhaling her scent-bottle, and well knowing the cruelty of keeping in such dire suspense a girl of Everil's sensitive nature.

Everil makes no reply. She is in tortures of impatience, and, unseen, her little hands nervously clasp and unclasp; her breath comes thick and fast, and it is only by a violent effort that she succeeds in controlling herself.

"The simple fact of the matter is this," said Lady Pendleton, leisurely, "your mother—she was my daughter—ran away with the man whom she afterwards called her husband, knowing him to be a married man at the time. They went through a ceremony of marriage for appearance sake, for Captain Vane's first wife was in Canada, and a person of low birth, and they hoped she would not hear of it. For some time she was in ignorance of the step her husband had taken, but upon hearing of it she immediately instituted proceedings which were pending at the time of his death. Therefore, Everil Vane, you are the child of infamy—a nameless nobody, with a brand upon your name, and if you persist in marrying this farmer, I will proclaim your shame throughout the length and breadth of the country."

"Have you no natural affection? No feeling of remorse for wishing to blacken the name of your own daughter?" exclaimed Everil, shocked out of her quiet demeanour by the unwonted cruelty of the customarily inflexible old woman.

"My own daughter," she ejaculated, with a harsh, jeering laugh; "she defied my authority, she cast my commands to the winds, and her reputation is now as nothing to me. I took you, as upon you I had intended to wreak my love of power. Now, you know all. Disobey me, and marry the farmer, and I shall publicly announce your shame, and then see will your proud yeoman think as much of you! Not he! Such people as he belongs to look to transmitting an unsullied name to their descendants. It is their chief riches, and the bastard scion of a noble house would be less in the sight of such a man than the poorest girl who works in one of his own fields."

"Torture me no more," cried the girl, sinking into an armchair, and burying her face in the cushions.

"I have no more to add," said Lady Pendleton, rising, and again gathering her impedimenta around her, "except that I desire and advise," she adds, significantly and emphatically, "you to accept Sir Percival Rossmore as your husband."

Lady Pendleton left the room, and Everil lay there motionless, she knew not how long.

Her brain was on fire. She could not think coherently, and suddenly starting up, she pressed her hand upon her burning brow, ejaculating:

"Great heavens! can this thing be true, or is it some horrid dream from which I may yet wake?"

Out into the night she rushed, bareheaded, letting the faint night breeze play upon her brow.

Up and down she restlessly paced beneath the shadow of the lime-trees the branches of which quivered and rustled as though they were whispering to each other.

Backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards, Everil walked unceasingly, revolving in her mind everything her grandmother had said, and recalling every point in her anxiety to try and find a flaw in the old woman's story.

But no. It was cruelly, painfully complete in every detail; and Everil clasped her hands in despair as she gazed at the calm heavens and the sweet summer moon now shining through the tree-tops, and sent up an unconscious prayer for strength to bear this heavy cross laid upon her.

And then she thought of Leopold Ormiston, and his brave, handsome, tender face rose up before her mind's eye as she thought of his loving words and looks by the mountain stream that afternoon.

But then, she also remembered that he had said that he would rather marry her, penniless as she was and without a breath of scandal upon her name, than if she possessed riches and a sullied reputation.

Poor Everil! She had not much knowledge of the world; or she would have readily recognised that to her, individually, no reasonable being would impute shame.

She recalled an instance she had known of a poor girl who was similarly situated; and she knew how commiseratingly the people around spoke of her; how she was merely tolerated, and at length left the place, hoping to lose her identity in the great world of London.

Her ideas upon the subject were very provincial, and the more Everil thought over the matter the more she bowed her head in shame, and felt she could never tell Leopold Ormiston of the cloud which hung over her life.

"Perfect love casteth out fear."

The aphorism occurred to her mind as she slowly paced beneath the limes, and she asked herself if her love for Leopold Ormiston were as perfect and as confiding as she had fancied it was, since she could not bring herself to tell him this miserable secret?

The girl's soul writhed in agony over this first great grief of her young life.

She had no one to speak to, no one to guide her, no one in the wide world to give her a single word of comfort or of advice, and her heart was sore and heavy within her.

For the burden laid upon her
Was greater than she could bear.

To give up her darling! To renounce for ever the thought of the delight of being his own loving and beloved wedded wife! The idea was maddening.

So little happiness had she had in her life that she could not bring herself to entertain the idea.

Give up her love—the one earthly thing that she idolised, the one bright spot in the cheerless, grey horizon of her life!

She knew how proud he was of his honest, unsullied name—proud of his yeoman descent—and in her innocence and ignorance of the ways

of the world she believed that he would look upon her as a woman with a brand upon her name.

Everil did Leopold Ormiston the justice to admit to herself that she did not believe she would be less dear to him than heretofore.

The girl loved him deeply, tenderly, and passionately—so tenderly that she could not bear the idea of being in any way the means of giving him a moment's uneasiness.

She felt that were she to tell him of her reason for desiring to give him up that he would lovingly overrule her objections.

And then—

She thinks, with a sickening sinking of the heart, if she keep silence and avoid him will he not think her heartless and changeable?—and justly so.

Everil does not know what to do. She cannot even allow herself to think of giving up Leopold Ormiston as a thing that is really inevitable.

It is so hard for the young and the loving to find their enchanted castles have no more reality than the baseless fabric of a dream.

"Miss Everil."

The girl started at the sound of her name, and in the dim light descried a woman coming towards her.

It was Bessy Power.

"Yea," she replies, as she recognises the woman.

Adding, with a faint smile:

"Were you wondering what had become of me, Bessy?"

"Law, yes, miss! Whatever are you doing out without anything on your head for. And the dew falling, too, and you in that thin dress, miss! Why, you'll catch your death of cold."

So Bessy rattled on—taking the privilege of an old and trusted servant to lecture Everil for what she considered her thoughtlessness.

"It was such a lovely night, Bessy," said Everil, evasively, "that I came out for a stroll before going to bed."

"But you should have put something around you, Miss Everil," replied Bessy, returning to her original charge.

"Is grandmamma gone to bed?" inquired Everil, ignoring Bessy's last remark.

"Yes, Miss Everil. Leastways, she's in her room, and in an awful temper, I heard Mrs. Turrell say. I believe it was because her ladyship's night wig wasn't becomingly curled."

Despite her heart-sorrow Everil could not refrain from giving a little laugh at this piece of information.

It will scarcely be credited were it not that truth is stranger than fiction, that Lady Pendleton actually wore a wig at night as well as in the day; a wig with an elaborately curled front which she had occasionally put into curl-papers, and wore so, thereby fondly flattering herself that anyone coming into the room unexpectedly would fancy it was really her own hair.

None were deceived save the old lady herself; and when she openly spoke of having "her hair" curled at night, it was a polite fiction upon the part of the household to humour her upon the subject, and take what she said in, apparently, good faith.

CHAPTER VII.

Alas! how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long—
Then there follows a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

UNREFRESHED and weary in mind and body Everil rose from her sleepless bed the next morning.

Attired in a flowing pale pink wrapper she descended to the breakfast-room to find Lady Pendleton there already, making her breakfast off cream, biscuits and fruit; for the old lady had too much regard for the delicacy of her complexion ever to eat meats, or anything of the kind in the morning.

"Good-morning, grandmother," said Everil, as she advanced to the table.

"Good-morning," curtly responded the old

lady, putting up her well-ringed cheek for Everil to kiss. "Humph!" she added, putting up her double eye-glass and peering at the girl, "what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Don't have that washed-out looking appearance this evening," said Lady Pendleton.

"I did not sleep well," replied Everil, "perhaps that accounts for the change in my looks."

"Then you had better lie down and have a sleep this afternoon," remarked the old lady, as she helped herself to another cup of the rich yellow cream.

"Why is it so important for me to have on my best looks this evening?" Everil asked, dreading the answer.

"Because I have had a letter from Sir Percival Rossmore, who is coming this afternoon. There it is, you can read it," she continued, throwing a blue and gold monogrammed missive across the table to her granddaughter.

Everil did not take up the letter, she merely said:

"I take your word for it, grandmother."

"I hope you have thought sensibly over what I spoke to you about last night."

"I have thought over it."

"Have you decided to give up the farmer?"

This was said with an expression of contempt which roused all the chivalry of Everil's blue blood.

The girl flushed passionately a deep, angry, unbecoming flush, which extended to her ears and round her white, pillar-like throat, in which a great lump seemed to rise and to choke her, hindering her for a moment from answering.

"Because I hope you have," continued Lady Pendleton, calmly breaking arrowroot biscuits into the cream; "we may as well now talk the matter over once for all, and there will be no need to refer to it again."

"I have no wish to refer to it," Everil at length managed to murmur with difficulty.

"To be kept in this state of agitation is really more than my nerves can stand," said the old woman, with an affected sigh. "I really was quite shocked when I looked into the glass this morning. I looked quite five years older from the worry of last night. Turrell even remarked my altered appearance!"

"I am sorry the discussion had such an unpleasant effect," remarked Everil, coldly.

"If you were not so selfish and so engrossed with yourself and your own affairs you would have noticed it also," exclaimed Lady Pendleton, crossly, "but you never take the slightest interest in anything that does not concern yourself. You are selfish—selfish to the core!"

Selfish! Was she selfish? Everil mentally asked herself. If giving up the dear desire of her heart were selfishness, then indeed she was so.

"Grandmother!" exclaimed Everil, roused out of her apathy by these unmerited taunts, "I am not as unobservant as I may appear to be, but I daresay I am more honest than the generality of your friends and acquaintances who make remarks upon your appearance, and congratulate you upon your good looks."

The next minute Everil would have given a good deal if she had not been drawn into uttering these unguarded remarks.

"What do you mean?" asked Lady Pendleton, suspending her labours and looking defiantly at her granddaughter.

"It is not necessary for me to explain," Everil replied, in some little confusion.

"But I insist upon your explaining what you allude to," exclaimed the old lady. "I detest insinuations. Explain yourself."

"I would rather not."

"I am not going to consult your likes or dislikes! Tell me what you mean by your innuendoes. I tell you again, I insist upon it."

Everil thought for a moment. She was incapable of telling a falsehood, and, unkind and unfeeling though her grandmother had ever been to her, she did not like to wound her susceptibilities as keenly as she knew she must do were she really to tell her the truth.

"You need not be obstinate," continued Lady Pendleton, gradually working herself up into

the rage she had just made a vow against, "as you don't leave this until I have an answer."

"Since you insist upon it, then," said Everil, playing nervously with her gold chocolate spoon, "I shall tell you what I meant. I have not been unobservant of your looks, but unlike many others, I have refrained from commenting upon them, simply because I could not, with truth, say anything about them which would be pleasing to your ear."

"Complimentary, I must say!" Lady Pendleton exclaimed, her voice trembling with rage.

"Well, I told you, grandmother, not to ask me any particulars. But since I have said so much, I may as well completely clear myself from the imputation of indifference to your personal appearance. I did remark you this morning, immediately upon entering the breakfast-room, and I saw how exquisitely and delicately your complexion and eyebrows were manipulated, and how well your curls and plaits were put on, and, as usual, I felt sorry, heartily sorry, to see a woman of your age so utterly given over to vanity! Grandmother," she continued, in a softer tone, "I am sorry to say this, but I have wanted to do so, and never before dared! It goads me and humiliates me, when I hear sycophants, knowing that your chief weakness is a belief in your youthful appearance, flatter you so outrageously and fulsomely; when I know in their heart of hearts they could not possibly believe it!"

Lady Pendleton looked almost demonic in her speechless rage.

She had a shrewd suspicion that what Everil said was the case, but she did not like to hear it.

Moreover, she had kept up the semblance of juvenility for so long, that she felt she must keep up the farce rather than acknowledge the transparent sham.

"You ungrateful girl!" the old woman almost shrieked, as she shook her clenched hand at her granddaughter. "How dare you make such a confession to me!"

"You forced me into it!" quietly replied Everil, rising from her scarcely tasted breakfast, and going over to the window.

"I shall not forget your impertinence," she exclaimed, "and as you have so very fully and elaborately answered one query, be good enough now to give me a reply to my other question, as to whether or not you mean to give up the farmer?"

"I presume you mean Mr. Ormiston?"

Everil cannot pronounce the name without a flush overspreading her face, and she cannot bear to hear him spoken of in a slighting manner.

"Yes, I mean Ormiston, my tenant, who holds the Manor Farm. Possibly you may have other intimate farmer acquaintances, but as I am not aware of the fact, I therefore allude to the person I mention!"

"Grandmother!"

Everil turns and stands before the old woman, her hands clasped before her, and with a wan, miserable face, from which every trace of colour had faded.

"Give me none of your tragedy-queen airs!" impatiently and unfeelingly exclaimed the wicked old woman. "Tell me at once what you have decided upon doing."

Everil knew well what she had decided upon, but as long as she had not given actual utterance to the decision she had come to, it did not seem so miserable and awful.

A great lump seemed to rise in her throat and almost to choke her; a film gathered before her eyes.

The room seemed to swim around her; for one brief second she seemed to see Leopold Ormiston's beloved face, and to drink in the tones of his voice, and then, nerving herself with a strong effort, Everil Vane deliberately committed the suicide of her soul.

"I have decided to give up Leopold Ormiston, and never, of my own accord, to see him or to speak to him again."

Surprised and delighted at this apparently easily-won victory over her granddaughter,

Lady Pendleton almost forgot her rage, and said grimly:

"I thought you would come to your senses."

"I have given up Leopold Ormiston," deliberately continued Everil, with a dazed, strong look in her beautiful eyes, "because I know him to be a proud, honest man, and I would not so far sully the name of his race as to take it, feeling I am a nameless nobody."

"That is the most sensible thing I have heard you say for a long time, grunted Lady Pendleton, although it is in your customary high-flown style."

"But in relinquishing Leopold Ormiston," continued Everil, in the same mechanical manner and monotonous tones, "I do not pledge myself to marry Sir Percival Rossmore."

"We shall see that."

"Nothing shall induce me to do it. I shall go and beg my bread from door to door before I would do such a thing!"

"And be taken up as a tramp and lodged in the workhouse," cackled the old lady. "You shall marry Sir Percival Rossmore, or I shall know the reason why!"

And so saying she left the room.

What a tangled web life seemed to the girl standing by the window, her miserable white face and tearless eyes betokening the mental agony she suffered.

Her brain was in a whirl; and she was unable to think coherently. She had merely an awful sense of blankness in her life, and almost unconsciously, she felt herself repeating the lines:

Alas! how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much, or a kiss too long—
Then there follows a mist of weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.

Alas! how hardly things go right!
'Tis hard to watch on a summer's night—
For the sigh will come and the kiss will stay,
And the summer's night is a winter's day.

CHAPTER VIII.

Alas! how hardly things go right!
'Tis hard to watch on a summer's night—
For the sigh will come and the kiss will stay,
And the summer's night is a winter's day.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

IN the very south of sweet Sunnyside, in the pleasantest county in all merry England, where the landscape looked almost ideal in its loveliness of hill and dale; heather-covered mountains, and uplands where waved the golden corn.

Not a cloud dimmed the sky on this bright June morning, and the sun threw its burning, mellow beams over the scene, as though seeking out the blue corncockle and the crimson poppies, and dyeing the heavy-headed corn of a richer hue.

It was early in the morning, but not so early but that the lark had long since left her dewy nest, and was carolling high in the heavens.

The little pinkish field-mice ran in and out, squeaking, through the tall corn, whilst their mothers showed them how to gnaw the stalks with their sharp little teeth.

The bushy-tailed squirrels jumped from tree to tree in mad pursuit of each other, and the thousand sweet sounds and delicious odours of the country on an early summer morning mingled to form one delicious whole.

The hour was about half-past seven on the morning of the very day upon which Everil Vane renounced the hope of her existence, and in a small, exquisitely neat cottage, half-smothered with great stary passion-flowers and twinkling jasmine, sat a small, delicate-looking man of about forty-five years of age.

His face was smooth and beardless, and his gentle, thoughtful blue eyes looked out from beneath long silky lashes.

A high, wide, white forehead denoted intellect of no common order, and the long, light, lustrous hair which was carefully combed back from his brow, was worn rather long, and had a slight curl at the ends.

The whole countenance betokened that Henry Garthside was a man of no common order.

His hands were long, white and slender, in admirable keeping with the refined face and head; but there the harmony of his person ended, for Henry Garthside was little more than four feet high, and had a huge hump between his shoulders.

He was carefully attired in a well-worn and well-brushed suit of rusty black, his snowy linen bearing testimony to the skill and industry of an elderly woman who sat behind the coffee-pot.

The woman was Barbara Finlay, his cousin and housekeeper.

The room in which they were breakfasting was half-kitchen, half-sitting-room.

It was low, and the ceiling crossed with oaken beams, carved with many a quaint and curious emblem, wrought in the long ago, when men worked for the gods and not for men—for the sake of art, and not for mere superficial show.

The furniture was all oaken, and coeval with the dwelling.

The many-shelved mantelpiece supported many a curious piece of family china, and conspicuous amongst it gleamed some rare golden-veined Venetian glass.

Two well-filled bookcases at either side of the wide, old-fashioned hearth-place, and a few large framed photographs of well-known pictures, bore testimony to the tastes of the occupants.

Barbara Finlay had a homely, gentle face framed by smooth bands of iron-grey hair, and surmounted by a clear white net cap.

In her fresh print dress and her large, old-fashioned collar there was something quaint, and old world looking about her, admirably in keeping with the whole style of the apartment.

Having finished his meal the man rose, and, going to the window, looked out upon the sweet landscape.

"Henry," said Barbara, as she took down his straw hat from a peg and laid it in readiness for him, and fetched his cane—with its gilt head and silken tassel—from the corner, "you ought to set out at once for Rossmore. The morning seems inclined to be sultry, and you know how fast walking in the sun makes your head ache."

"Thank you, Barbara, for thinking of that," he replied, gently. "Yes, even through the cornfields it is a good four miles from this to Rossmore."

"I wish you would give up going there, Henry," suggested Barbara, as she busied herself amongst the breakfast things. "Sir Percival does not remunerate you so liberally for acting as his secretary when he is at Rossmore, that we should be very much poorer at the end of the year."

"I have repeatedly told you, Barbara," he said, quietly and decisively, "that it is not for the sake of what he pays me that I am content to be at the beck and call of Sir Percival Rossmore. You know that when I was a child Sir Percival, then a big, thoughtless boy, was the cause of my deformity. Since then—at least since we both came to years of manhood—he has striven to repay me for the injury by putting me—a poor, misshapen creature—in the way of earning my daily bread."

The woman's gentle grey eyes flashed scornfully.

"Henry! Henry! You are too good and gentle," she exclaimed. "Sir Percival ought to do far more for you than he does, or ever has done! I do not see why you should feel so grateful to him for having appointed you the parish schoolmaster. He knew very well he could not get anyone else half as learned or half as conscientious!"

And having relieved her mind of this opinion Barbara Finlay flounced from the room.

With a sad little smile upon his gentle face Henry Garthside put on his straw hat, and taking up his stick walked forth into the fresh summer's morning. He strolled through:

The yellow fields of waving corn,
Where the summer sun shone cheerily—
'Twas joy to walk on a morn like this
Among the bearded barley.

He soon entered the precincts of a park. The

part he walked through—taking it as a short cut—was rather unfrequented at any time; and the sound of his measured footsteps along the dry, narrow path roused from their lairs in the bracken and fern the startled dappled deer.

They looked at him curiously with their full wondering eyes, and then scampered away and were lost in the forest.

A gloomy, grand, stately old pile of building was Rossmore. An ancient Norman stronghold, the scene of many a siege and sanguinary affray, there yet remained the towers, keep and donjon, which had formed the chief portions of the castle which William the Conqueror built for his trusty and well-beloved Fulke Fitz-William; from whom it afterwards descended in the female line to the ancestors of Sir Percival Rossmore.

At various periods the different occupants of Rossmore had continued adding to the pile as their taste and circumstances suggested and permitted, and it now stood, frowning stately and conspicuous upon a high rock, which descended sheer for upwards of two hundred and fifty feet to the broad and swiftly flowing river Mere.

Many a weird and dismal tale was told of victims thrown from the tower windows into the river beneath, and tradition said that before a death occurred in the family that the white Lady of Rossmore might be seen silently gliding over the Mere by the light of the moon.

The stately footman who opened the hall-door at once ushered Henry Garthside into a small, luxuriously furnished, morning room, where sat Sir Percival Rossmore.

He was a tall, thin man of about fifty-five, with a hatchet-shaped face, carefully brushed, scanty grey hair and small grey whiskers. His eyes were small, brown and bloodshot, and his thin-lipped mouth revealed, when he smiled, a set of strong-looking, yellow, even teeth. These teeth were the most forbidding feature in his countenance; so strong and even, they looked as though they could crunch the bones of a victim!

Sir Percival was engaged in discussing no ordinary breakfast. The small round table was laden with many delicacies, the very names of which were unfamiliar to Henry Garthside.

Upon a small stand beside him stood a case of liqueurs, for Sir Percival Rossmore scorned the more ordinary beverages of tea, coffee, or chocolate, and breakfasted after his own fashion. He was attired in a gorgeous dressing-robe, rich with the hues of the East, and his feet were thrust into yellow morocco slippers.

There was a good deal of the Sybarite about this man, and also much of the low, sensual element.

He held a letter in his hand which he was intently reading; raising his eyes as Henry Garthside entered he merely nodded superciliously, and said:

"Good-morning, Garthside. I shall attend to you in a minute."

The letter was evidently of importance, for Sir Percival read it over again, and then even a third time, before he carefully folded it up, placed it in its envelope, and commenced to talk to Henry Garthside upon some matters of business.

The discussion did not last more than half an hour, and referred chiefly to the catalogue which Henry was making of the Rossmore library.

Having received sundry directions, the schoolmaster rose to leave, when Sir Percival, toying with the letter upon the table beside him, said, without looking at Harry Garthside:

"Garthside, have you heard any report about me lately?"

He asked the question half-complacently, half-nervously, and gave the schoolmaster a swift glance out of the corner of his eye.

"No, Sir Percival."

"I thought you might have heard a report that I am about to be married. I am tired of a bachelor life," he continued, with a little un-

easy laugh, "so I am about to turn Benedict, and settle down."

The schoolmaster turned ashy pale, and sank again upon the seat where he had risen.

"Sir Percival," he said, calmly and distinctly, "I must ask you, and I must know. Where is Muriel?"

(To be Continued.)

ALTERNATE.

HALF in the shadow, and half in the sun

This world is always lying;
And we could not turn the nights to days,
Or hinder the storms by trying.

And the year is made up of the light and the dark,

And our lives of joy and sorrow,
For whatever of fortune we hold to-day
Will slip from our hands to-morrow.

So, half in the shadow, and half in the sun,

Our little worlds are lying,
And we could not turn the nights to days,
Or hinder the storms by trying.

But hope is good of a cloudy morn,
To cheat us of half our sorrow,
And help us to cheerfully earn to-day

The light that will come to-morrow.

Some walk ever with downcast eyes,
And think it is always raining,
While the year goes by like an autumn day,

Filled up with a long complaining.

And there are others who go their ways

'Neath skies that seem unclouded,
While the year goes by like a summer day,

With the roses of pleasure crowded.

But could we search along the paths
That look so gay with flowers,
I think we should find that their feet
have pressed
The thorns as well as ours.

Should find that the way has not all been bright

Because of the many shadows
That lay, like a pall, o'er the lonely vale,

Ere they reached the pleasant meadows.

So let them be glad, if be glad they may

After their night of sorrow,
And laugh the more in the sun to-day
For the rain that will come to-morrow.

And though the whole of our lives
should be

Alternate joy and sorrow,
We know that God has been good to-day,
And God will be good to-morrow.

M. A. F.

SCIENCE.

DAMAGES OF ILLUMINATING BY GAS.

THE injurious influence of the products of combustion of coal gas upon the leather bindings of books is only too well known. Vellum seems unaffected; morocco suffers least; calf is much injured, and Russia still more so. The disintegration is most rapid with books on the upper shelves of a library, whither the heated products

of combustion ascend, and where they are absorbed and condensed. By comparing specimens of old leather with specimens of new it is quite clear that the destructive influence of gas is due mainly to its sulphur. True there are traces of sulphates in the dye and size of new leather bindings, but the quantity is insignificant, and there is practically no free sulphuric acid. That leather may be destroyed by the oil of vitrol produced by the burning of gas in a library is proved by the following observations and analysis:

The librarian of one of our public libraries forwarded to me the backs of several volumes which had been "shed" by the books on the upper shelves in an apartment lighted by gas. The leather of one of these backs (a volume of the "Archæologia") was carefully scraped off so as to avoid removing any paper or size from beneath. This task of scraping was easy enough, for the leather was reduced to the consistence of Scotch snuff. On analysis of the watery extract of this leather the following figures were obtained: Free sulphuric acid in decayed leather, 6.21 p.c.; combined sulphuric acid in decayed leather, 2.21 p.c.; total, 8.42 p.c.

IMPROVED METHOD OF PLASTERING.

By means of this system the plaster is prepared beforehand in alabs, which are fixed expeditiously to the joists, forming the ceiling at once as it would be when lathed and plastered with the two coats of lime and hair in the old process. The slabs or sheets are made in the following manner:

A layer of plaster of Paris in a moist or plastic state is spread evenly on a flat surface surrounded by raised edges of the form to produce the desired bevel of the edges of the slab or sheet, and upon this first layer of plaster is laid a sheet of canvas or other woven fabric of proper size, or a thin layer of loose fibres, which is made to embed itself into and adhere to the plaster.

Two laths are then laid along two opposite edges of the canvas, upon which another layer of plaster is spread evenly, and before it sets a rough broom is passed over the surface of this second layer of plaster to form a key for the finishing coat.

When the plaster is set the slabs are nailed to the joists, as before mentioned, and the joints are made good with plaster of Paris. The third or finishing layer of lime and plaster is then applied to the ceiling in the ordinary way. Besides the advantages derived from rapid fixing, with the minimum of dirt and inconvenience, the new ceiling is practically unflammable, and very economical to put up. Moreover, unlike the old plaster ceilings, it can never become detached from the joists; in fact, besides being self-supporting, it braces and strengthens all partitions and slight timbers.

THE longer linseed oil used for painting is kept the better, both in regard to its drying qualities and its transparency.

A NEW soap has been patented in Germany which is composed of common soap with the addition of phosphate of soda. It is said to have especially good cleansing qualities, and to be adapted for use in salt as well as fresh water.

AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVES FOR RUSSIA.—We understand that the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Philadelphia, Pa., are now proceeding with the construction of fifty large-sized, first-class locomotives, lately ordered for Russia. They are to be completed during March next. In all, nearly 2,000 men will be required on the job, for which about £100,000 are to be paid.

ELECTROSTRICTION.—Electrostriction is the name given to a peculiar action on the mercury of a thermometer. If the bulb be chemically coated with silver, and then, by the electrolytic process, covered with the same metal, the mercury will traverse some portion of the scale, and finally take up a definite position independently of temperature. Copper, silver, iron, and nickel constrict the bulb, while zinc and cadmium distend it.



[IN DEEP DISTRESS.]

A WOMAN SPURNED.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Oh! woman's face is sweet and fair,
But woman's heart we cannot know.

AGNES went back to her boarding-house in a state of doubt and depression which she could not shake off.

As the hours wore slowly on the impression that her husband was in deadly peril of some kind deepened, in spite of her efforts to reason herself out of such vague fears.

They clung to her and rendered her so miserable that as the clock on her mantel rang out the hour of eleven, she took her hat and a light shawl, and rapidly arranging them, ran downstairs and knocked at the door of the landlady's apartment.

Mrs. Meadows had not retired to rest, and she opened the door herself to her late visitor. She was a kind-hearted, elderly woman, of methodical ways, and she exclaimed, in great surprise:

"Where have you been, at this late hour, by yourself, Mrs. Manvers, for I know your husband has not come in yet? Has anything happened? You are looking as pale as a ghost!"

"I have not been out, but I wish to go, and I came to see if you could find someone to accompany me. I am wretched about Mr. Manvers, and I must see what is detaining him so late at the warehouse. When I parted from him this evening he looked so ill that I was alarmed. I would not have left him if he had not insisted on it."

"Nonsense, my dear, your husband is quite able to take care of himself, and it is not so very late—only eleven—and for city hours that is early. If he is like most men he will not like having you run after him in this way. You had better go back to your own rooms and wait quietly till he comes in."

"I cannot do that," said Agnes, desperately. "I know that something dreadful is happening to Julian, and I must go to him. Has Mr. Kenton come in? If he has he will take me to town, I know."

"Well, yes, he is upstairs, but I hardly think it proper for a young woman like you to be going on such a wild-goose chase as this with a comparative stranger. Your husband won't like it, you may rely on it."

"Julian and Mr. Kenton are friends, and I know he is a gentleman. Leave me to explain to my husband, Mrs. Meadows, and, please, send someone up to ask Mr. Kenton to come down to speak with me."

The old lady saw how desperately in earnest she was, and she rang the bell at once.

Mr. Kenton came down immediately in response to his landlady's summons.

He came in looking cheerful and commonplace, and seemed greatly surprised to find Agnes awaiting his appearance. Before Mrs. Meadows could speak she started up, and said:

"It is I who wish to see you, Mr. Kenton. I am extremely anxious about Mr. Manvers, for he is far from well, and I have a strong impression that he is too ill to get here without assistance. I can't tell you how or why it is, but I seem to know that he needs help. I must go to him, and I have sent for you to ask you to take me to him."

"Certainly—I will go with you at once, madame. I have noticed for several days past that Manvers was not looking well, or in spirits, but don't be alarmed on his account, Mrs. Manvers; such men as Julian overcome sickness rapidly, and even if your apprehensions prove true he will soon be all right again."

Once in the street, the two walked on rapidly to the nearest point from which a cab could be taken, and when her companion attempted to talk with her she said:

"Please don't speak to me—I cannot listen—I cannot think of anything but the awful dread that is upon me. Don't think me rude, Mr. Kenton, for I cannot tell you how grateful I am

or your escort. I feel like one half demented by fear for Julian's safety, yet it seems foolish to think that anything more than illness can have detained him so late."

Kenton comprehended the state of her mind, and thought herself very silly to work herself into a nervous paroxysm because her husband did not return as soon as she expected him. But he admired her sincerely, and wished that he had such a tender simpleton himself to watch for his coming.

He gallantly said:

"I know that you are incapable of intentional rudeness, Mrs. Manvers, so I will make no further attempt to convince you that your fears concerning Julian are groundless."

Very soon the two stood in front of the tall, dark house in which no living creature seemed present.

Agnes hurriedly said:

"We will go up the alley and knock at the door of the counting-house. Julian is there, I know."

As they entered the narrow passway the carriage containing her insensible husband passed out of it at the farther end, and if they had reached the place five minutes sooner the well-laid plans of Markley would have been baffled.

"All is as dark here as in front," said Kenton. "No one can be in the counting-house. Manvers has gone home and we have missed him. All we can do is to return as quickly as possible."

"The window-shutter has not been closed," said Agnes, in eager tones. "Julian would never leave the place till he secured that. He must be in there in the darkness, Mr. Kenton."

They approached the window, looked in, but could see nothing. Agnes called softly, but no answer came, and after a pause, she said:

"I believe you are right. He must have gone while we were coming. Let us go back as quickly as possible."

As they passed the door returning, Agnes paused a moment and shook the lock, again

calling on the name of her husband, and with a sigh almost of relief she turned away, saying:

"Julian will scold me, but I shall not care if I find him safe when I get back."

As she stepped forward her foot came in contact with a small book which lay within a few inches of the wall.

Stopping mechanically she picked it up, and by the faint light that penetrated to the alley saw that it was a thin leather-covered pamphlet such as are used by merchants for dotting down memoranda. She said:

"Julian must have come out by that door and dropped this on his way. It is lucky, after all, that I came hither to find and take it back to him."

Before going on with her Kenton closed the heavy wooden shutter over the window which fastened with a spring, marvelling within himself at the carelessness of his friend in leaving it open.

They drove back to Mrs. Meadows' house, and found that lady watching for their return at the door.

"Is Mr. Manvers here?" asked Agnes, breathlessly, as she ran up the steps. "We have missed him, and he must be at home by this time."

"Then you did not find him?" said the landlady, bewildered. "He has not come in, for I've been watching for him ever since you left."

Agnes sank down on one of the hall chairs almost in a fainting condition.

"Not here?" she gasped. "Then where on earth can he be? He was not in the counting-house, unless—unless he was lying there incapable of answering me when I called to him."

"He could not have been there, Mrs. Manvers," said Kenton, "because the place was dark, and if Manvers had been seized with illness, as you fear, he would hardly have turned the gas off. The book he dropped coming out proves, too, that he must have left the place. Calm yourself, dear madame; he has only stopped on the way to take refreshment, of which he must have been greatly in need, for he has not been in either to dinner or supper to-day."

Agnes tried to accept this consolation, but in her foreboding heart she felt all its futility. She arose with effort, and said:

"I believe I will go to my room and wait. But if he does not come what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

Touched by the deep anguish in her voice, Kenton said:

"I will go down to the place I know he always stops at when he lunches; the house is not closed yet, and I am sure I shall find him there or meet him."

"Oh, if you will do that! If you will only bring him back safe to me, I will thank and bless you for ever! You are tired, I know, and it is selfish in me to accept your kind offer, but I am so wretched—so certain that something is wrong."

"Oh, I am as fresh as flowers in June, and glad to walk, for I have been sitting at my desk all day. I will be back with good news before long," and the kindly-natured young man hastened down the steps.

In her anguish and bewilderment, Agnes, when left to herself, paced the floor for hours. The book she had picked up in the alley was forgotten, and when it fell from her pocket at her feet she mechanically took it up and thrust it into a private drawer in her desk with the vague consciousness that it was too important to be trusted to any place less safe than that.

Afterward, when she tried to recall what she had done with it, she could not remember having put it into the desk at all, and as the drawer had never been used by her for any purpose, it did not occur to her to look into it, anxious as she was to recover this possible clue to the fate of her husband.

We pass over the anguish of that night—no pen could do justice to the suffering of the hap-

less wife bereaved of the idol of her life in the first flush of their wedded happiness.

And what she knew must follow his disappearance was almost as hard to bear as the misery of knowing that he was lost to her.

Kenton spent the greater part of the night in his fruitless efforts to trace his friend; he then called at the headquarters of the police, and employed a detective to continue the search for the missing man, and went home to report his failure to Agnes, and try to get a few hours' sleep before going to his business in the morning.

Two letters came for Agnes the next day.

One from her uncle announcing his return to Selwood, and claiming her promise to join him there; the other from Mrs. Tardy, giving her an account of her slow progress toward recovery, and describing the life she led at Kirkwood.

It was ten o'clock before these reached her, and the detective had made his report to Kenton, which was duly transferred to the anxious wife.

No clue had been found to the disappearance of Manvers.

Kenton had gone as usual to the warehouse, and let himself in with his pass key.

The detective had visited the place soon after, and together they had made a thorough investigation, but found nothing to indicate a struggle, or even a hurried departure on the part of Manvers.

Everything was in order, and the key of the desk was missing.

From these indications the two men came to the conclusion that there had been no foul play, and that if Manvers could not be traced he had voluntarily disappeared.

Kenton remembered the words of Manvers on the previous day, and it seemed to him now that but one interpretation could be put upon them. Aware of the ruin that was approaching, he had possessed himself of such funds as were accessible, and fled.

Reluctant as he was to come to this conclusion, for he had liked and esteemed the missing man, he could find no other solution to the state of things, if all efforts to discover Manvers' whereabouts failed.

The house was closed, and a policeman put in charge of it till the return of Markley, who might be absent a week, or possibly longer, as it was stated that he had gone to visit his brother who lay at the point of death.

When the report of failure to find a clue to her husband's disappearance was made to Agnes, she said, with white lips:

"Mr. Manvers is as incapable of baseness as I am of believing that he would desert his post; that he would desert me in this clandestine manner. If he cannot be found, he has been foully dealt with. But it is too early yet to despair. Employ other men, Mr. Kenton—spare no expense to discover what has become of him. I have money of my own, and I would sooner spend every shilling I have in the world than not find out the secret of last night's villany. Julian may be dead, but his name shall not be covered with obloquy, if I can prevent it."

"You are right, Mrs. Manvers, and I will help you as far as I can. A more honourable man than your husband never lived, and I can bear testimony to his many good and noble qualities," replied Kenton, with emotion. "You have more courage than I thought, and with friends to back you, we shall yet discover the truth concerning this perplexing affair. I will take the measures you suggest, and come again this evening to let you know how we progress."

"Thank you; but do not neglect your own affairs to attend to mine. Employ the police, and leave the search to them. I have friends to stand by me, thank Heaven! and if you will send a telegram which I have written to my uncle, I shall be greatly obliged."

Kenton eagerly assented, and she gave him a strip of paper on which she had written:

"Come to me at once. I need your assistance."

This was properly addressed, and in response to it the professor came up that afternoon in a

state of extreme uneasiness as to what could possibly have happened.

But the truth went far beyond his wildest apprehensions, and the poor old gentleman wept some of the bitterest tears he had ever shed over the wreck of the happiness he had so lately exulted in.

Agnes confided to him all Manvers had told her of the state in which he had found the affairs of the firm when he was left to manage the business alone, and both believed with certainty that if anything fatal had happened to Julian, his fellow-partner was to be held responsible for it, and that Markley had acted as his agent. But how to bring it home to them was the question.

Brenton's cunning had doubtless prepared every step to the catastrophe of the previous night, and no traces would be left behind to criminate himself.

The absence of Markley at this especial crisis added to their suspicions, for the professor and his niece were both aware that Manvers had no belief in his honesty, nor in his good feeling toward himself.

But the excuse given for his sudden journey seemed plausible, and both hesitated to accuse him at once of being the agent through whom Brenton's schemes were carried out.

They must wait and see what the next few days might develop before taking any steps toward inculpating Markley.

Manvers might be found, or come back of himself, and explain his mysterious absence.

Agnes kept up her courage she hardly knew how, but she felt that this was no time to give up.

She must sustain herself for Julian's sake, and defend him to the bitter end if he did not appear to defend himself.

She forced herself to take food enough to sustain her strength, though it was tasteless and loathsome to her in her present excited and wretched state of mind.

She entreated her uncle not to write and alarm Mrs. Tardy, till all efforts had failed to gain any tidings of Manvers, forgetful that the daily papers penetrated to every nook in the country, and that an item about such a matter would be copied in every journal in the land.

The evening papers on that day had on their front pages in large letters, "Mysterious disappearance of one of our most promising young merchants."

Beneath this was an account of what was known to the police, and various editorial comments on the disappearance of Manvers.

One said:

"This young firm promised to be brilliantly successful, but since the departure of the eldest partner for the Continent, it has gone down so swiftly and suddenly that one hardly knows what to think of the managing capacity of the one left in charge of the business. We give no names, and suspend our judgment till something further is known."

Another said:

"A man is missing from his usual place, and whispers are rife of fraud, embezzlement, and flight to foreign shores. We will say this much, though, in defence of the one accused: if he could be guilty of such baseness, never again will we trust any human creature, for he seemed the very soul of truth and honour."

The journal containing the last notice the professor purchased and took up to Agnes, and she wept thankful tears that amid the general condemnation which she felt certain awaited her husband, at least one voice was raised to speak justly of him.

On the following morning an advertisement appeared in that paper offering a large reward for any news of Julian Manvers, who was believed to have been foully dealt with after he left his counting-house on the night of September 19th.

The days passed and nothing was discovered.

Agnes gave up all hope of ever seeing her husband again, and how she lived on through those terrible days was afterwards a source of astonishment to her.

Hope did not sustain her, for she lost all hope after the first failure to discover what had become of Manvers.

That he was lost to her for ever she firmly believed, but she felt that the duty of defending him from the charge of fraud and flight was hers, and as far as her feeble power went she was ready to give the last remnant of her life, if it was necessary, to rescue his name from obloquy.

A meeting of the creditors was called, but nothing could be done till Markley's return.

No telegram could be sent to him, because no one who knew him could tell exactly where his brother lived, so a week rolled away before the affairs of Brenton and Manvers could be looked into.

At the end of that time Markley came back in fine spirits, asserting that his brother was recovering and would soon be about again.

He affected to be greatly shocked when told of the disappearance of Manvers, but shook his head and said he never had much faith in him, and things had gone on very queerly from the time of Brenton's departure.

Markley had been confidential clerk, and he knew everything about the business that could now be told.

He called on each creditor and talked with him in private before the general meeting took place, and the consequence was that there was a very strong feeling of prejudice against the absent man when they came together to ascertain what chance there was to have their different claims settled.

It was soon ascertained that there were no assets—the books had disappeared, and also every paper that could connect the name of Brenton with the disasters of the firm.

Markley had made good use of his opportunities since his return, for he had been allowed to take entire control of the house, and he even slept there at night.

The result of the examination was that Julian Manvers was believed by nearly all of the creditors to have embezzled twenty thousand pounds, and made good his escape to some foreign land where he could live in luxury on the fruits of his crime.

This decision had scarcely been arrived at, when two persons appeared on the scene whose presence had not been anticipated or prepared for.

Mrs. Manvers came in, leaning on the arm of her venerable uncle, both looking worn and weary, but full of confidence in the man who had just been adjudged guilty, with scarcely a voice raised to speak a word in his defence.

Agnes looked like a marble woman, so white, so calm in her great despair, that even the heart of Markley felt a movement of pity when he looked on her.

She was dressed in deep mourning, and that added to the pallor of her complexion.

Not more than seven gentlemen were present, and they huddled together in a confused group, wondering why the wife of the condemned man had come among them.

Chairs were offered to the two who were looked on as unwelcome intruders.

The professor waved his away, and stood leaning on the back of the one into which his niece sank, feeling incapable of sustaining herself under the ordeal she had herself insisted on passing through for the sake of the man she loved.

One of the directors of the bank which had been swindled of so large a sum frowned heavily, and said:

"Madame, it was unwise in you to come hither to-day. You will only hear what must wound you deeply; however guilty your husband may be, we have no wish to denounce him before you."

Summoning all her courage, Agnes replied in low, sweet tones, that did not falter:

"It is because I know he is not guilty that I am here to say that which no one else will say for him. If you have been cheated of your just dues, it was not through the agency of Julian Manvers, but through the utter baseness of his part-

ner, aided by that man I see among you. If Mr. Markley would speak the truth, he would tell you that the failure of this house was arranged for before my husband was left to its sole management. He—"

Markley made an effort to interrupt her, but Professor Tardy sternly silenced him by saying:

"My niece came hither to defend her husband, and she shall be heard without any interruption from you, sir. It is as little as these gentlemen can do to listen to what she has to say, and require you to do the same."

Markley scowled on him, and seemed determined to speak, but one of the gentlemen laid his hand on his shoulder, and said:

"If Mrs. Manvers has anything to say, whether important or not, it is but courtesy to allow her to be heard."

In the same slow, quiet manner Agnes went on:

"I have much to say that I think is of the last importance to the memory of the man who is gone, who I know has been so basely traduced in your hearing to-day. Mr. Manvers told me, before he so strangely disappeared, that large sums of money which had passed through Mr. Brenton's hands could not be accounted for; and from the conditions of the books and papers left behind him, he was constrained to believe that his partner had appropriated them, and left him to bear the burden of those heavy losses, knowing that failure must be the inevitable result."

"I urged him to call you together, gentlemen, and show you what he had discovered, that he might save himself from the charge of complicity with Mr. Brenton, and he finally told me that he thought the advice good, and would act on it. He spent the whole of that last day in preparing for the exposure he intended making on the following one; and that night, while still at work, he was either murdered or spirited away by some agent of Mr. Brenton's, and in spite of the alleged absence of Mr. Markley, I believe he was that agent."

Markley uttered a coarse oath, and striding forward, said:

"You attack me, madame, in this shameless manner without having the slightest proof to sustain your accusation. I left this city that morning, as can easily be ascertained by anyone who wishes to follow my steps. I have been absent a week, and I come back to find that Julian Manvers has consummated the villainy he planned as soon Mr. Brenton's eye was removed from him, by running off with all the available funds of the house. Your precious husband is a scoundrel and swindler, madame, and in place of having been made way with by me, he is now on the high seas with his booty, seeking some place of safety for himself. But this Government has long arms, and he may be reached yet."

"Let him be sought for then in every land beneath the sun," replied Agnes, with the same impenetrable calmness. "Would to Heaven the protecting arms of justice could enfold him, and then he would be rescued from your power. Mr. Markley, I denounce you as the accomplice of Mr. Brenton in all his villainy, and I feel the conviction that you will both yet be found out and punished as you deserve. My poor Julian has been your joint victim, and it is to screen yourselves that he has been made to disappear—that this atrocious charge of embezzlement may be brought against him instead of those who have really accomplished it. If an angel from Heaven could come down to assure me that my husband is innocent, I could not believe it more implicitly than I do now. He, the soul of honour—fastidious in his ideas of right and wrong—be capable of committing a gigantic fraud! Impossible! impossible!"

She sank back exhausted by the effort to speak so long, and Markley, looking her clearly in the face, cynically said:

"You must be mad to bring such a charge against me. If I knew where your husband is to be found I would drag him myself to the bar of justice. He has destroyed as promising a business as a man need desire, and in his greed

for money has ruined himself, and impoverished his too confiding partner. As to your charges against myself, I can afford to disregard them, as they can be easily disproved, and none of these gentlemen here will attach any importance to them except your uncle, who, of course, will stand by you, since he brought you here to make this absurd accusation."

"Yes, yes," said the professor, with sudden fire, "I stand by my niece, and I endorse all she has said. I know it to be impossible for Julian Manvers to commit a mean action, and his disappearance has been the result of a base plot against him which has been carried out through Mr. Brenton's agent or agents since he sailed. Who is so likely as yourself to have been employed by him in this work? Manvers objected to you as an employé of the firm, and was overruled by his partner for purposes best known to you and him. I shall follow your steps from the time you say you left the city till your return. I will set detectives on your track, and it is my firm belief that in the end this stupendous piece of villainy will be exposed in all its blackness, and you and your accomplices be brought to answer for this crime of which I accuse you—abduction or murder, and the embezzlement of the money you accuse Julian Manvers of having appropriated."

"Well done, parson," said Markley, with a sneer. "I have listened to your preaching to the end, which is saying a great deal for my patience. You go it strong, but I can stand it; follow me up, if you choose, and spend your money for nothing. I am as safe as a church, as the saying is, and defy you to discover anything against me. By this time Julian Manvers is out of reach with his ill-gotten gains, and I assure you, that for ten times their amount, I would not burden my conscience with the murder of any creature. If he does not die till I kill him, Manvers may live as long as the Wandering Jew."

Agnes leaned forward with clasped hands and parted lips, as he uttered the last words.

A faint pink tinge came into her pallid cheeks, and she said:

"Then my husband is living, and I shall find him again. You were too cowardly to tamper with his life, though you are trying to take from him what, to him, is far more precious—his good name. You have uttered many falsehoods this morning, Mr. Markley, but I feel that one grain of truth has at last been winnowed from the chaff. You did not dare to kill my Julian, and he will yet appear to confront you, and bring home to you the wickedness of which I accuse you!"

Markley changed colour more than once while she spoke thus, but with an assumption of indifference he said:

"Let him come on as soon as he will, madame. I shall be ready to meet him, and challenge him to produce any evidence against me. Zounds! how long am I to be badgered in this way by a half-demented woman?"

"You will find that there is method in my madness," said Agnes, rising, and taking the arm of her uncle.

Then turning her sad face toward the group who had listened with absorbing interest to what had been said:

"I came hither, gentlemen, to enter my protest against the condemnation of Mr. Manvers on such evidence as is now accessible to you, and I entreat that you will suspend your judgment on the statements made in the interests of his employer by that man, who has spoken so coarsely and rudely to me. Mr. Brenton is alone accountable for the losses you have sustained, and if Julian Manvers is still in the world, I feel the conviction that he will reappear in time to convict him and his ally of their complicity in crime."

The dignity of her manner, the pathos in her tones, deeply touched those to whom she appealed, and almost with one voice they assured her that they understood and appreciated her motive for appearing before them; one, more impulsive than the others, exclaimed:

"It is impossible to believe that Manvers

could desert such a woman as you are, madame, and I, for one, withhold my judgment."

"Thank you, sir," she replied, with a faint smile. "It will only be just to do so. No breath of suspicion has ever tainted the fair fame of Mr. Manvers till now, and it will surely be most unfair to condemn him on the testimony of his enemy. Be just, be generous till he can come forward to speak for himself."

Moved by her devotion to her husband, their losses were for the moment forgotten, and assurances were given her that time for thorough investigation should be granted before condemnation was passed on one who was so dear to her heart.

Aroused by this from the stern control she had put upon her feelings to enable her to pass through this scene without breaking down, colour came back to her cheeks and lips, tears came to her eyes, and with all her native impulsiveness she raised her hand and said:

"As Heaven hears me, I believe that my husband is innocent, even in thought, of such baseness as has been imputed to him, and with Heaven's help I will yet find him, and bring him to thank you in person for the assurance you have just given me."

With a graceful motion of her hand she bade them farewell, and went out with her uncle.

"That's a woman worth talking of," exclaimed one.

But Markley said, with a sneer:

"It was all done for effect; she knows that her tirade against me is all bosh, and it was only intended to gain time. I would not be surprised if she knows her Manvers is hiding, and intends to join him as soon as she dares to do so."

"Such is not my opinion," said the bank director, gravely. "A woman like that is as incapable of dishonesty as she evidently believes her husband to be."

(To be Continued.)

UTILIZATION OF THE HEAT OF THE SUN.

IN New York a trial has been made in the presence of several gentlemen, including representatives of the press, of Mr. Adams' patent solar cooking apparatus, and the result was pronounced to be highly satisfactory. The compound of the High Court was the place selected for the experiment.

At 11 o'clock in the forenoon the apparatus was so placed in the open air as to receive the solar rays, and about every half hour its inclination was changed by a touch of the hand. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon the apparatus was removed from the spot and placed in a room covered with a railway rug. At 8 p.m., when the cover and the rug were removed, the contents (several pounds of mutton and some vegetables) were found thoroughly cooked.

We should not omit to mention that the stew, which proved to be most palatable to those who partook of it, was found to be quite hot, while the vessel could hardly be touched by the naked hand.

The apparatus, we may state, consisted of a copper vessel tinned inside and painted black outside, with a glass cover enveloping the vessel with an inch of hot air.

The solar rays, passing through the glass, we understood, became transformed into obscure heat which the glass retained. The vessel was fixed on to the bottom of a conical reflector lined with common silvered sheet glass, and was 21 inches square at its large base and 8 inches at its small base.

Mr. Adams has made another apparatus of greater simplicity than the one experimented upon, which, by means of solar rays, and in the open air, can cook chops and steaks as well as expediently as over a coal or coke fire. A very important point is that the heat can be retained as long as three hours and a half, and perhaps longer. Mr. Adams hopes soon to be able, under more favourable circum-

stances than at present, by means of an apparatus constructed on the same principle, and by a combination of flat reflectors, to concentrate solar rays to such a degree as to work wonders in science yet undreamt of.

BRAIN FOOD.

AUTHORS do not diet themselves properly, I am convinced. The quality of a man's work depends, to a great extent, upon what he feeds on at the time he is doing it. After years of study devoted to the subject, I have ascertained that the very best incentive to brain-work is fish. But let not the reader run away with the idea that any fish will do for any work. On the contrary, a poem written on codfish and oyster sauce might be excellent, a sermon written on the same would be idiotic. If you wish to write a good drama, turbot is the best fish; for poetical work, comic, sprats; serious, codfish and oyster sauce; for a romantic story, boiled soles; for a leading article, whelks; for sermons, periwinkles. For writing essays upon pure or applied sciences I have always found bloaters the best food. No man could do anything on salmon, unless it was to make his will or write an actionable letter to his enemy.—"Dagonet" in the "Referee."

ROYAL FUNERALS.

UNTIL the reign of Henry V. it had still been the custom to treat the mortal remains of English Sovereigns with neglect, if not with absolute disrespect. But the victor of Agincourt was interred in very different style. The body was embalmed and carried in great pomp to the Church of Notre Dame in Paris, where a solemn service was performed. "Then a grand procession, blackening all the way, proceeded to Rouen, where the body lay in state. The coffin was drawn by four splendid horses; over the coffin, on a bed of crimson and gold, lay a figure representing the King to the life, with a rich crown of gold on his head, a sceptre in the right hand, the glove and cross in the left, and with a face looking heavenward." Having arrived in England and approached the capital, the funeral procession was met by a deputation of fifteen bishops clad in their pontifical robes, and many mitred abbots and Churchmen, who chanted the service for the dead as the body was borne over London Bridge and through the streets to St. Paul's. Here the procession ended with a solemn celebration of the obsequies "in the presence of all the Parliament."

Very different was the end of the succeeding King. The body of Henry VI. was exposed for three days in St. Paul's, and then buried quietly at Chertsea Abbey, whence it was removed by Richard III. on the ground that the people were accustomed to believe in miracles wrought at the tomb. Nor could the bones ever afterwards be found, although diligent search was made for them in the reign of Henry VII.

As for Edward V. and his unlucky brother, they were carried down by the murderers, and buried at the stair foot "meetly deep in the ground under a heap of stones." Richard III. was picked up on the field of Bosworth, stripped and laid across a horse behind a pursuivant-at-arms, and taken to Leicester, where, after being exposed three days, as usual, it was buried with little reverence in the Church of the Grey Friars.

The next grand funeral was that of Henry VIII. in St. George's Chapel at Windsor, after a lying in state at Whitehall. On this occasion the officers of the household "broke their staves into shivers on their heads with heavy and dolorous lamentations, and hurled the fragments into the grave, not without grievous sighs and tears, as well of persons of the meaner sort as the nobility, very piteous and sorrowful to behold."

The subsequent Royal funerals were not of an imposing kind. Torchlight processions continued to be in vogue, notwithstanding the Re-

formation, and notwithstanding a protest made against them by the Heralds' College in 1662. But the principal accessory to them was the "herse" with its effigy. The "herse" was a platform draped in deep black, and surmounted with a waxen figure. It was erected in Westminster Abbey, and remained there for some months.

The "effigy" was visited by all the curious, and often laudatory verses were attached to it by means of pins or wax or paste. Some of the old figures are still preserved in the Abbey, and there were many more to be seen in the middle of the last century. That of Queen Elizabeth was "worn out" in 1703, and all the finery except the eternal ruff had decayed away; but a new effigy of the Queen was made in 1760, and has remained, as well as the figures of Charles II., William and Mary, and Anne, until the present day.

The later records of Royal funerals are not very interesting, and will not in any sense compare with that of the Duke of Wellington in 1852.

THE LITTLE BOUQUET.

ONLY three tiny flowers, with pretty green leaves—yet, how much it tells me. While I look upon them they seem to grow and change, until I have an angel in each tiny petal. They lift their faces—the dear, little faces, so full of His love and thoughtfulness—to mine, telling me of a far-away friend, who sends this little knot of flowers as a white-winged messenger from the sunny home, to tell me all is well there.

I welcome it most gladly, for I dearly love all flowers. Though mute and voiceless to many, they are eloquent with meaning to me, and cheer and strengthen me amid all life's petty cares and trials.

It seems to me a cowardly heart that can lose faith or hope while flowers bud and blossom; for, surely, He who cares for them will much more care for us, when he gives us so many of these bright stars of earth, letting them blossom everywhere, by palace or hovel, in the valleys and upon the mountain-top, in the broad meadows and beautiful forests, and along the dusty roadside; by homes of joy and mirth, by the sick-bed and the silent homes, where rest the earth-forms of those who have gone on with Him—gone to that other home, where flowers are still more beautiful, and fade not, nor die. Ministering angels are they, and we gather them close to our hearts in joy for them and the work they are ever so silently doing.

I wonder, sometimes, if, among the first familiar things we find in the beautiful home above, there will not be flowers, such as we have known here—fragrant roses, tender violets, purple pansies, dear little forget-me-nots, nodding lilac-plumes and lilies, lilies of the valley, so modest and good in their lowly beauty; queenly water-lilies, lilies with great, pure depths or white, such as He must oft have gathered upon the hills of Judea and along the Galilean shore. Surely, the sight of these, and the warm hand-clasp of those we early loved and lost, would make sweet welcome for us, and our happy songs would swell the glad chorus the angels sing around the throne where all is love and peace.

E.

A GRAND circus, capable of holding 3,500 persons, and stabling for 125 horses, has been completed at Brussels.

A RAFFLE is to take place at Stafford House, as soon as the list is filled up, for some valuable jewels and lace sent by a lady to be disposed of for the benefit of the Turkish Relief Fund. The jewellery consists of a handsome diamond and opal spray, a diamond and opal star for the hair, and some Brussels lace. These can be seen at Stafford House daily between twelve and two o'clock, when any persons wishing to place their names on the list can do so. The price of the tickets is one guinea.

"PLEASE, MAMMA, LEAVE THE LIGHT."

THE single paragraph in the "Home Magazine" referring to children's having a light, "to go to sleep by," if they want it, is a grain of gold. This is not a weak indulgence, likely to make them timid or nervous in after years. Nor is the desire a mere whim.

Probably some of the severest suffering ever inflicted on a little child in a Christian home is this very denial. Children are different in temperament, and in many instances can be easily trained to go to sleep in a dark room. But towards a delicate or nervous child who dreads the darkness it is sheer cruelty to insist upon it. The amount of mental pain thus endured should be a sufficient reason; and add to this that the practice of thus exciting a child's fears and rasing his nerves night after night is only calculated to increase and perpetuate the very fear and nervousness that would otherwise gradually disappear.

In childhood I dreaded nothing more than to be left alone in the dark, and mother always kept a light. But has that habit proved to be one of a lifetime? On the contrary, it was outgrown as easily as dolls and bibs; and now it is impossible for me to sleep with even a faint light in the room.

Children, provided no ghost-stories or frightful or painful tales are allowed to be told them, are usually easily accustomed to go to sleep without a light, if someone stays in the room. But loneliness and darkness together are too much for the nervous organism of almost any child. My children never, from earliest babyhood, feared the dark, but they wanted "mamma," and knowing that she was close by, or holding her hand, were perfectly content. If I wanted to leave the room, however, the request was always: "Don't take the light, mamma," and it was never disregarded.

Never, on any account, should a child's fears or fancies be ridiculed. This does harm in many ways, and harm only. It never lessens the fear or removes the fancy; but hurts and grieves, or stirs up anger and sometimes even hatred. Gentle and even training, calm reasoning and the force of example will do all that is needed, in this direction, in time; but without patience and love, failure is certain. Early and gradually, all along life's way, in little things and great, let us teach our children, by word and example, and fill their minds with pleasant thoughts, useful knowledge and good purposes; side issues will take care of themselves.—H. R.

GERMAN HAVANNAHS.

MOST of the so-called Havannah cigars which arrive in England are shipped from German ports. It appears that a higher price is obtainable for dark than for light-coloured cigars, the demand for the former being about three times as large as for the latter. Unfortunately, however, owing in a great measure to the partial failure of the tobacco crops of late years, light-coloured tobacco is much more common than dark. In order, therefore, to render the cigars made of light-coloured tobacco saleable at a higher price, and also to improve the appearance of old and faded cigars, if we are to believe a pamphlet recently published at Bremen, where there are several of these manufactories, various infusions have of late been prepared and largely sold, under the name of "Havannah brown," "sap brown," and "condensed sauce." All these preparations are now openly advertised, and directions given for using them.

None of these infusions contain anything particularly injurious, most of them consisting of brown vegetable dyes; nevertheless, they enable the manufacturer to give to cigars of old and faded leaves the appearance of good Havannah cigars. A German paper states that if a piece of white blotting paper, saturated with diluted sal ammoniac, is passed a few times lightly

over the cigar, the colouring matter, if any has been used, will come off on it, whereas the natural brown of the tobacco-leaf will remain.

THE NEW MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NEW YORK CITY.

THE new American Museum of Natural History, the corner stone of which was laid by ex-President Grant in 1874, was formally opened recently by President Hayes. The ceremonies consisted in addresses by the President of the Board of Trustees, the President of the Association for the Advancement of Science, and others.

It is not generally known that the fine structure now open, and which is located at 77th Street and Eighth Avenue in the city, is but a small portion—one eighteenth—of the colossal edifice ultimately to be erected. Four entire city blocks have been purchased and set apart for the building, which will be 850 feet wide and 650 feet long, surmounted by a dome 120 feet in diameter.

The structure now finished contains the various collections of objects of natural history hitherto kept in the Arsenal in Central Park, besides a large number of new and rare specimens lately added. It is of brick trimmed with granite, and is 70 feet wide and 200 feet long. There are four exhibition stories, and the entire structure is built of iron, concrete and other fireproof material.

THE TELEPHONE.

It is stated that the German Postmaster-General is about to have an extensive series of experiments made, with a view to the introduction of the telephone into the telegraphic service. Several hundred specimens of the telephonic apparatus, as manufactured by Siemens and Halske, have been ordered. Mr. Bourdeaux, superintendent of the Submarine Telegraph Company of Dover, lately made important experiments with the telephone, instruments having been attached to the wire at St. Margaret's and at Sangatte, on the French coast, where talking and the playing of a musical box could be distinctly heard.

THE LOVE PACT.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The trance gave way
To those carresses, when a hundred times
On that last kiss which never was the last
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived and died.
Then followed counsel, comfort, and the words
That make a man feel strong. TENNYSON.

WHEN the inmates of Mostyn Manor assembled around the hospitable board at summons of the dinner gong there was such variety in the expression of their respective countenances that had an acute physiognomist essayed to interpret it he would have speedily relinquished his task in baffled disappointment.

The noble host himself looked decidedly glum, for affairs had not gone as he hoped with regard to the committal of the rioters, and he had not of course yet learned the good news of the return of his miners to a more accommodating frame of mind and hence the prospect of a renewal of work at the pits.

Hugh had found, to his great disgust, that he must on the morrow accompany his father on a similar errand to that which had engaged them that day.

Lady Vavassour and her daughter were both very reserved and guarded in their speech on the events of the morning.

Indeed they could hardly be otherwise when as they glanced at Rupert Kesterton they marked the mingled phases of subdued rage, covert jealousy, and apprehension which by turns sat on his unprepossessing visage.

The evening dragged on wearily, notwith-

standing the forced efforts made by Lord Thanet, badly seconded by his son, to render it agreeable to his guests.

All thought it a relief when they were able to retire to their chambers.

Even there, however, one of them found little of peace or calm.

The tumultuous passions of Kesterton kept him for long hours pacing to and fro in his apartment; and when finally the schemer sought his couch dreamland gave no more pleasant pictures than waking life had done.

At first the images of two fair faces hovered over his pillow—those of Adeline Vavassour and Eugénie.

But their lips alike wore a scornful curve, their eyes held alike a repellant light, and each countenance was averted.

Then, taking the place of the shadowy presentment of those he thought of with what he would have called "love," came a long and stern array of the men whom he hated. Some too with terrible menace in their faces and bearing: the fair boy ensign who had fallen by Rupert's pistol in a falsely fought duel; the grisly, gore-smearred features of James Meers—and another he knew not!

Presently Kesterton perceived, with that strange panic fear which often besets the sleeper, that this last countenance displaced all others.

When, like a broken mist-wreath, the features of a living or dead foe—or those whom Kesterton counted as such—faded out always this strange visage appeared.

By some strange instinct Kesterton felt it was the face of a living man.

His horror deepened as the grim phantasmagoria went on till when at last the lips of Meers's ghastly countenance seemed to syllable "This is my avenger!" it reached its climax.

That shadowy visage—long, gaunt, wrinkled and contorted—with thin, cunning lips and strange, gleaming eyes of yellow-green, grew into a palpable form which bent over him nearer—nearer—nearer—and yet more near!

With a cry of terror Kesterton awoke and sprang from the bed, his limbs trembling, his brow bedewed with cold perspiration.

He tottered to an old oaken cabinet which stood in one corner of the spacious chamber and, taking therefrom a bottle, poured out a mighty bumper of wine and drank it eagerly.

By connivance of Lord Thanet's butler Kesterton usually kept this remedy for haunting thoughts in his bedroom.

It was successful in calming his agitation, and he said, in half contempt of his own fears:

"That ugly demon has never worked me ill—nor is it likely so to do. Such a face never sat on an English pair of shoulders; and I'm not likely to go to Paris, Baden, or any such like place in a hurry. They're just a trifle too hot for me after my last escapades at cards, billiards, etcetera. However, I'll not try to sleep any more at present. Instead it will be better to think out a plan for getting those five hundred pounds from the earl. The old hunk has turned a regular skindint since the pits have been closed. Hang it," he went on, mentally, "I must have the coin this week somehow. I wonder whether Hugh would give a lift?"

And he set himself to unravel the meshes of sundry pecuniary entanglements which could no longer be neglected.

Captain Mostyn was abroad early the next morning.

The grooms and stablemen had not yet arisen when by the aid of the keys of the stables, procured from the coachman overnight, he set himself to rapidly saddle Bayazet, and in a few minutes the hoofs of the spirited animal were beating a sharp tattoo on the ice-bound road which led to the mines.

Hugh had determined that he would see Eugénie if possible before the old lord was ready for his journey.

The grey morning haze was just clearing from around the lofty chimney shaft of the engine-house, and the first red level rays of a winter's sun gleaming on the latticed windows, as he reached Wilmer's cottage.

After the fashion of country folks, Robert

and his mother were already up and were seated at their breakfast in the front room.

Eugénie had also been with them, but, at sight of Hugh passing the window, she sprang up, "blushing celestial rosy red," whispered a few words in the old dame's ear, who nodded sagaciously thereat, and tripped quickly from the room.

Captain Mostyn glanced inquiringly around the room as he entered with an apology for disturbing the family at an inopportune time. He too had caught a glimpse of her for whom his visit was intended, and a slight shade of vexation settled on his open brow.

At the pressing invitation of mother and son, and the further intimation from the latter that he had news of importance to impart, Hugh seated himself by the broad hearth with its cheery fire.

In terse, business-like phrase the engineer gave the captain an account of his yesterday's interview with the men, which intelligence elicited Hugh's hearty expressions of satisfaction.

After some further business talk Captain Mostyn asked Mrs. Wilmer, with a degree of hesitation almost amounting to timidity, whether he could have a few minutes' interview with her adopted daughter.

"Nay, nay, sir," returned the old lady, with a decided negative shake of the head, "you cannot do that. The lass wished me to tell you that she had said her last word—and a main true one too—when you saw her on the day you saved Robert's life. I'd like to pleasure you grey well, sir, but it mayna be, and I think the young lassie right enow too in this."

Hugh disented strongly from this view, and urged his cause so powerfully that Mrs. Wilmer at last arose and left the room for the purpose of inducing Eugénie to return thither.

"I don't think my mother will get my sister to come here, sir," observed Robert as the door closed on her.

"Ah! Will it be fair if I ask you why, Mr. Wilmer?" inquired Hugh with a look of anxiety.

"For several reasons, sir," responded the engineer. "Eugénie is of a very firm temper, and when she thinks her duty demands a certain course—you'll excuse my plain speaking, sir?"

Hugh nodded impatiently.

"When she deems a certain course her duty she'll not be moved from it. And there's another reason—a woman's reason."

"Yes! What is that?"

Robert hesitated a moment ere he replied:

"They don't like anyone in whom they are interested to see them when their pretty faces are not at their best."

"Eugénie is always that to me," remarked Hugh, simply.

He could talk, he felt, to this young Yorkshireman as if he had been a brother and needed no guardedness of speech.

"But, Mr. Wilmer," he went on, with a smile, "was there any possible meaning in your remark?"

"There was, sir. I was doubtful of mentioning it, but, considering all things, I think it better to tell you."

"Then, in as guarded and temperate language as he could command, Robert went on to relate the rencontre between Eugénie and Kesterton and its result, adding that the girl would probably bear an unsightly mark across her forehead for some few days.

As the recital went on the expression of Hugh Mostyn's face became terrible, and at its close he rose and paced the room with rapid strides.

"The dastardly cur!" he said. "Mean villain that I knew him to be, I had not deemed him capable of that! By Heaven! I could scourge him to death!"

"Stay, sir," broke in Wilmer. "Will you take my counsel?"

"If it be possible."

"It is brief. Beware of your kinsman. I am a comparative stranger to him, but of this I am well assured—he hates you; and to those whom he hates he is a dangerous man!"

"What mean you?"

"I can give no explanation, sir. But of this be sure: if Rupert Kesterton could save your life by lifting his hand he would not raise it—if he could take it by letting that hand fall, then—"

"What?"

"You would be a dead man!"

At that juncture Mrs. Wilmer entered the room. She bore Eugénie's decided negative to any interview with Hugh.

More than ever anxious to see his beloved, Captain Mostyn pleaded passionately with the old dame to use her good offices again.

"'Tis of no use," replied Mrs. Wilmer, with decision. "And, with every respect for you, sir, as our master and my son's preserver, I say again that the lassie's right, and I'll no' worry the poor lamb more the morn. She's her own trouble to bear."

Finding all entreaties futile, Hugh rose at last, and, taking a kind farewell of mother and son, mounted his horse and rode off with a decidedly gloomy expression upon his handsome face.

Kesterton had also been an early riser that morning, his disturbed slumbers notwithstanding.

Fortified by a strong cup of café noir, well laced with cognac, and the further defence of an excellent cigar, Rupert strolled about the grounds and farm homestead until the summons to the family breakfast should sound.

On learning from one of the grooms that his kinsman had gone for an early ride, though whither the man did not know, Kesterton thought it an excellent opportunity for waylaying Hugh in order if possible to secure the good offices of the latter in obtaining the five hundred pounds from the earl.

The captain had just dismounted at the entrance to the stables and was striding up the rear path through the shrubbery to the mansion with a very set mouth and stern brow.

Kesterton, on the contrary, desirous of being as conciliatory as possible, advanced to meet him with an ingratiating smirk on his face and his hand extended.

"Good morning, Hugh. You are early abroad. It's rather fortunate you are so, for I want a few words with you."

"I want none with you, Rupert Kesterton," rejoined Hugh Mostyn, in a deep, hoarse tone; "at least none on terms of amity."

Kesterton looked at his kinsman in blank amazement.

"Confound it! I don't understand you," he said, anxiously. "You seem awfully tetchy this morning. What have I done to offend you?"

Hugh stopped short and faced him.

"See here, Rupert Kesterton," he said, in deep, measured tones, "you are a man whom I have ever little loved. A libertine, a spendthrift, a prodigal, a gambler, a profligate, a duellist like you could hold little in common with me. I know well the evil odour in which you were held by many men whom I had found noble and merciful of judgment, yet for our ties of blood relation I shut my ears where I could not defend you. I still fondly dreamed that something of gentle nurture, something of patrician strain, must run in the more ignoble current which coursed in your veins. I find I have greatly erred, and I now tell you that in the hour when you—not even content with a vile insult to a lady—inflicted on her a coarse blow you broke all bonds which united us, and—"

"Insult to a lady, Hugh! you are surely mad! Who—"

"I repeat—a lady, sir! Eugénie Wilmer is worthy, by gifts of Heaven's own bestowal, to rank with the most exalted. Mark me well. Dare but again to offer her the slightest occasion of offence and I will spurn you as I would a cur—I will crush you as I crush this!"

As he spoke the young man snapped in twain the stout malacca hunting-crop which he held as easily as if it had been a dry twig of the sere laurel which stood hard by.

"Enough, Mr. Kesterton. Forget not what I have told you. I wish your company no farther, and our future intercourse on my part

shall be confined to the sparsest notice I can vouchsafe my father's guest."

Hugh then strode off towards the house, leaving Kesterton engaged in biting his cigar with vicious energy.

As Captain Mostyn passed out of sight by a bend in the winding path the schemer's blank face suddenly assumed an exultant look.

"A lady indeed! Oho! I see it all now! This explains the girl's call for 'Hugh.' Very good, Hugh Mostyn, excellent, my dunder-headed kinsman. I may be all you say, but assuredly I am this—a man who never yet forgave insult or injury. Now I can account for your coyness with regard to the French betrothed, the marquis's daughter. Good! Very good! The news, imparted under the seal of secrecy, to Lord Thanet that his heir is enamoured of a vulgar peasant ought to merit such a trifling service as the loan—yes, the loan—of five hundred pounds. Gad! if the old earl were not so hatefully straight-laced he ought to give me another five hundred to spirit the girl off on my own account and leave his hopeful son free to devote himself to Mademoiselle D'Aubrión."

This idea pleased Kesterton so much that he broke out into a loud guffaw of enjoyment, though the vindictive scowl which bent his brow remained unchanged.

In consequence of Lord Thanet's absence for many hours Kesterton had no opportunity for private talk with him that day, and as the old earl still seemed much exasperated by the lenient view which some of his brother judges took of the rioters' conduct Hugh also deemed the time unsuited to speak to his father of the topic uppermost in his own mind.

Very early the next forenoon Kesterton obtained an interview with Lord Thanet, and if his joyful yet sneering look as he left the library was any index of his success he had no reason to complain of his aged kinsman's generosity.

Scarcely a half-hour had passed when Hugh sought his father in the library with a full determination to make a clean breast with regard to his love affairs.

His hopes were scarcely so high as he could have wished, but he looked for at least a patient and to some degree indulgent hearing from the parent who had ever been to him the kindest of earthly friends, the most tolerant of boyish follies and the proudest of his son's achievements.

But as he entered his father's presence Hugh's heart sank in his breast.

Never before had those yet keen eyes gleamed on him with that cold, hard light—never before had his sire's brow wore so stern a frown when bent on him.

The old man motioned Hugh to a seat upon his desiring a conference and turned that hard, cold gaze fixedly on the young man's face.

This reception disconcerted Hugh greatly. He, however, went on bravely, if in somewhat broken words, to tell his story and speak of his hopes.

He related rapidly his meeting with Eugénie and all the subsequent course of their mutual love; he expatiated with a lover's fervour on her beauty and goodness; and finally conjured his father, by the affection he had ever borne him, to permit him at least to break the pact made in the far-off days between himself and the Marquis D'Aubrión.

The earl heard all without interposing a word, though his face worked convulsively and the veins stood out on his forehead like knotted cords.

Only when Hugh had concluded did he speak.

Then, in sharp, decisive words, he stigmatised Hugh's conduct as of baseness unparalleled.

He—a Mostyn—one of that house, whose proud boast was, like Tunstall, the "undefiled," who fell at Flodden Field—to insult his father's bosom friend, to mock with a false suit his peerless daughter, to win the heart of the poor French paysanne even, when he must have known the end could but be her ruin or a broken heart, was monstrous! And, to crown his meanness, Hugh made the confession only when he

thought his liaison known to the country side and sure to reach his father's ears!

Overwhelmed by the tremendous stream of opprobrious reproaches poured forth in that cold, steady tone, humiliated by the light in which his father had set acts which Hugh felt in his inmost heart did not deserve to be so characterised, and crushed by the stern, unchanged glance of the eyes he loved so dearly, the young man at last stumbled from the room in a state of apathy and despair such as he had never before known.

He rushed from the house and for long hours wandered in a kind of aimless misery about unfrequented roads and by-paths—ever ringing in his ears his father's last words:

"The pact shall never be broken; or, if it be, you are my murderer, for when that is broken so will be my heart!"

Mid-day passed and the sun declined towards the west, but Hugh Mostyn knew it not. He was conscious of no progress of time, he was aware of no sense of place.

He only felt a devouring desire for movement, as if thus alone could he flee from the dull misery which stagnated around his heart.

The bright stars came out, and over a crescent moon swept a light, hurrying foam of cloudlets.

Something in the aspect of the sky as he cast his heavy, weary eyes upwards reminded Hugh Mostyn of a certain happy even when under the Norman orchard trees he had seen such a sight before.

Then from Heaven he brought his mind back for a moment to thoughts of earth and he glanced round to see whither he had wandered.

With a start and an involuntary shiver he recognised by the moonbeams the tall chimney shaft of the pits on his right hand, and but a few rods before him the cottage of the Wilms.

At that moment a soft, sweet contralto voice rose on the air "like a stream of rich distilled perfume."

He listened with a throbbing heart. How well he knew it.

It was Eugénie's, singing an evening hymn of her Church, an Ave Maria, under the solemn stars.

Urged by an irresistible impulse he sprang forward in the direction from which the sound proceeded and the next instant had strained the startled girl to his breast in wild agitation.

"Hugh," she said, gazing with astonishment at the pallid, half-demented face revealed by the moonbeams, "let me free, I pray thee! This is unseemly. It is unkind after my request."

Then she added, with quick fear:

"But, Hugh, how strange thou lookest. Art thou ill, my beloved?"

"No," the young man replied, recovering by a great effort some portion of composure—"not ill, Eugénie."

"What ailest thee, my Hugh? Ah!" she added, with a woman's quick apprehension, "thou hast spoken to thy father and—and—all is over!"

"All is not over, Eugénie!" cried Hugh, passionately. "Never!—never! But I cannot speak falsely to you. I have indeed begged my freedom this day—and thus far failed."

"So will it ever be, Hugh," responded the girl, sadly. "My heart forbode it. Did I not tell thee that it was vain to imagine that the son of an English peer might hope to espouse a poor, ignorant child like me?"

"Nevertheless that must come to pass, Eugénie," said the young man, in a firm voice. "With or without his consent thou shalt be mine!"

"Never without it, Hugh," replied the girl, in a voice free from tremor as his own. "Not for my sake shall it ever be that thou shouldst bring down with sorrow to the grave the silver hairs of him who has watched over and cherished thy earlier years, and, as thou hast often told me, been to thee the kindest friend of earth. No, my beloved. It is enough for me to have been once loved by thee. I may truly say of myself

what thou once toldest me of that dying German princess whose song runs 'I have partaken of all earth's bliss, both living and loving.'"

"But listen, Eugénie. I dared not name this to my father, but this very morning I learned by letter from a friend who knows her well that Hélène has no affection for me—her heart is given to another. Shall I then be forced to unite myself with a loveless bride to fulfil a compact so little reasonable as that which our fathers made? No! Failing all other means, I will see if my freedom cannot be obtained from Mademoiselle D'Aubrión herself."

For a moment Eugénie made no response.

Hugh had so strong an advocate in her own heart that she found it difficult to discourage him.

But her proud instinct of right conquered.

"I see little hope in what thou hast but now said, Hugh—only perchance an opening for fresh sorrow. Will thy disobedience to thy parent be lessened by this lady also disobeying her sire? I am only a poor, weak girl, but my last advice to thee, my noble, knightly beloved, is to go forward only on the straight path of right, though thy own heart suffer and mine—break! Farewell, Hugh: farewell perhaps for ever on earth!"

She drew her hand quickly from his grasp, and, ere he could intercept her, entered the cottage.

CHAPTER XXX.

*'Tis a face unknown,
But seems so searching his and his alone;
Frying and dark. . . .
Which still till now had gazed on him unseen;
At length encountering meets the mutual gaze.*

The day following that on which Georges Grandet and Jacques Cochart had made their way to the little Norman village Madame Christine had another visitor.

Very bent and decrepid the old woman looked as she cowered over the blazing wood fire with a drawn and haggard face and thin, withered hands which never ceased their nerveless tremour as she spread them before the genial blaze.

That terrible interview had exhausted her small remaining stock of vitality and she looked now a broken old woman on the very grave's verge.

Yet when the new-comer was announced Madame Christine did not refuse to see him, although the dread and suspense that her face exhibited were pitiable in the extreme.

He was a tall, erect man, great-coated, and with the lower part of his countenance swathed in the many folds of a large wrapper worn more for purposes of disguise than as a protection from the piercing wind without.

He had given the name of Henri Fourget to the little lass who waited on Madame Christine, but as he entered the room he removed the swathing from his face and disclosed the features of the Marquis D'Aubrión.

The old soldier seated himself opposite to Mere Christine and after a few words of sympathy with her infirm condition said, suddenly and brusquely:

"What has the ancient retainer of our house—she who has received so bountifully of our largesse—she who had sworn by holiest things to fulfil her trust truly—what has that woman to say to the lord whose service she has neglected—to the benefactor whom she has betrayed?"

The aged woman rested her hands upon the elbows of her great armchair and, raising her emaciated frame from it by a great effort, fell at the old noble's feet.

"For the love of Heaven, Monsieur le Marquis!" she cried, in her weak, piping voice, "be merciful! Few are the sands of life yet to run for me. I entreat you to spare a thing so crushed as she who kneels to beg your pity—to deprecate your anger!"

"Rise, Christine," responded the marquis. "I will forbear to upbraid you. 'Twere useless now. Indeed, why should I expect the hireling to do me faithful service? Alas! I have found

my own flesh and blood will not do that," he added, with a touch of pathos in his deep tones. "Let what has been done or left undone alike pass unrebuked by me, but this at least as your lord and benefactor I demand—that you tell me truly all you know of this girl from our last interview unto the present. First, does she live?"

"Eugénie is living, Monsieur le Marquis," was the reply.

"I will not ask you why you let her leave this place on that mad journey. Some foolish tenderness of heart, moved by a girl's entreaties I am willing to suppose. But this I must know: How is it that others—those of my own house even—are aware of her existence and something—I know not what—of the ties between us?"

"I swear unto you, Monsieur le Marquis," replied the woman, with more firmness than she had yet shown, "that I know nothing of that. No word has passed my lips which could afford the slightest clue to any."

The Marquis D'Aubrión bent a searching look on Madame Christine, then turned away his eyes and gazed gloomily into the fire, seemingly convinced by her earnest tones.

"How could they have learned it?" he murmured. "I have been here but once during long years, and none followed me to gain a clue."

"When did you last hear from her, Christine?" he asked, abruptly, after a short interval of silence.

It was noticeable that he never used the word "Eugénie."

"A week since, Monsieur le Marquis," replied the old woman. "She was then with some English friends she had made in the north of that country—among the coal mines, monsieur."

"Ah! Let me see the letter."

The old woman shivered violently.

"I have it not, Monsieur le Marquis," she said, at length, in timid, reluctant tones.

The keen eyes of the marquis sought hers as if to read her thoughts.

"You have destroyed it? Well, you have had others. Let me see the previous one. Give me all you have."

The old woman tried to collect her slow, uncertain thoughts. Should she tell the marquis that she had burned each letter as it came? No. She had already by her negligence done too much injury to the master for whom she felt the affection and respect which a feudal retainer erewhile held for his lord. Come what might she would speak the truth.

"Monsieur le Marquis," she said, in agitated tones, "I have not destroyed the letters, but yet I have them not."

Then she went on to tell of the two strange visitors of the previous day.

Despite his strong efforts for self-control, the working features of the marquis showed his mental sufferings as the recital went on. Even Christine's imperfect description left no doubt that the young man was Georges Grandet and the sinister stranger who had stolen the precious box was Jacques Cochart.

At the conclusion a terrible groan burst from the marquis's broad breast.

"Then much of my bosom's secret is in the power of my foes, and those letters with their clue in the very hands of a demon in human form."

"Oh, what have I done, Monsieur le Marquis?" cried Christine, wringing her hands in despair, while tears coursed down her wan cheeks. "Heaven! it is I who have done you this bitter injury! Forgive me, my dear lord, forgive me!"

"Cease these idle repinings, woman!" said the marquis, sternly. "Let me think—let me think! 'Tonnère!' he went on, in a muttered monologue. "How could these two men know that anything could be learned here? It is incomprehensible."

Suddenly a light broke upon him.

"Christine," he queried, "on your return here did you receive a packet of letters from the post-master?"



[A GULF BETWEEN.]

"No, Monsieur le Marquis. He called upon me and told me that two strange men and a woman came to his office one day, and afterwards he found the packet had disappeared. One of them must have stolen it. He knew not which."

"I see! Christine, the girl must be induced to return at once. Send you to her this very night. Let your letter state that you are on the point of death, and conjure her, by the love she has for you, to return for a last interview. Let it go to-night. Forget not. Tell her also that a trusty friend will proceed to England to escort her hither. Let me have the girl's address and I will charge myself with this duty and the care of her in the future."

Christine assented eagerly, and, the marquis having inscribed the address on his tablets, took a not unkindly leave of his old retainer.

As the old noble was being rapidly driven to the station in the best vehicle the village hostelry possessed his mind was busy with schemes for the future.

"I will circumvent these cunning villains yet," he thought. "I will have the girl in my own power and dispose her beyond their prying search. And her happiness shall be seen to more tenderly than of yore, poor child. Hers is in truth a hard lot for one born to— No more of that. Let Hélène's nuptials be but over and amends shall be made for all; but the secret—with all it holds of our honour—shall never see the light of day. I swear it by Heaven and earth and the lowest pit!"

When Georges Grandet first saw the levelled pistol barrel pointed at his heart he gave himself up for lost.

Yet the terror which had bound his faculties disappeared as if by magic.

This ominous black shadow was at least human and only to be dreaded for its earthly power.

The Parisian had no weapon to hand. He had carefully packed his pistol case in his portmanteau and was entirely unarmed.

He would at least make an effort for life. As his ear caught the click of cocking the weapon Georges prepared for action.

The next moment there was a vivid flash, a loud report, and the carriage was filled with light blue smoke.

But Georges was unharmed. By a sudden movement he had slipped from his seat to the floor and the ball had buried itself in the splintered woodwork of the carriage behind the cushion against which he had been reclining.

In an instant he sprang to his feet, dashed to the window with a tiger spring, and had wrested the pistol from the would-be assassin's hand ere the clearing of the smoke revealed that he yet lived.

Then he felt himself grappled in return by a muscular hand with a vice-like grip at his throat.

Georges was able to perceive by the moonlight that the black cowl of the assailant's cloak had fallen back and that his face was concealed by a sable vizard.

With his left hand Georges made a movement to tear it off.

It was successful, and he saw for the first time the face of his assailant.

A low, brutal countenance, with low, receding forehead, broad, flattened nose and bull-dog jaw—the visage of a ruffian such as might often be met in the purlieus of Paris—in the tapis-frances, where thieves and assassins most do congregate.

Not, however, the features Georges had expected to expose—those of Jacques Cochart.

The Parisian had scant time for observation, for, with an angry, beast-like growl the creature seized his hand with his yellow, wolfish fangs.

Maddened by pain, the young man strove to thrust the villain from his narrow, precarious stand on the footboard of the carriage.

The effort was vain, and Georges felt that he had to deal with one whose muscles were far stronger than his own.

For some seconds they grappled thus in mortal

struggle, then Georges felt himself being gradually drawn upwards!

To his consternation the young man perceived that in place of his being able to hurl his adversary from the hazardous position which he occupied, he was himself being slowly but surely drawn upwards!

Downward the assailant drew his head with Georges's hand held in his teeth as in a trap of steel—outward he drew his right hand, which clutched the dandy's delicate throat!

Already the Parisian's head and shoulders protruded through the window.

"Surely the guard must have heard the shot!" thought Georges, in agony. "They will stop the train!"

Vain hope! It had been unheard in the rush and roar of their progress, and no relief could be expected from that quarter.

Even in the supreme horror of the moment the young man could perceive that the train had entered upon a long viaduct through the centre arches of which a broad stream ran.

Despite his frantic struggles and difficult cries for aid, Georges felt himself being drawn farther and farther out of the window!

A few moments more and they would cross the water which glittered in the moonbeams far below.

"At least we will go together!" he thought, with a desperate resolution: "crushed to shapeless masses of bruised flesh and broken bone, or drowned in the more merciful river, which ever it may be, I will not die alone!"

A moment more and the margin of the stream would be below them!

Suddenly a fierce shriek broke on his ear, drowning his own despairing cries—a rushing roar filled the icy air—glowing orbs of crimson fire shone on the road they sped along—and behind them a black, serpentine mass dashed on around the curve of the viaduct!

It was an advancing train on the down rails over which the struggling twain projected far into air!

(To be Continued.)



[THE DELIVERER.]

THE LORD OF STRATHMERE; OR, THE HIDDEN CRIME.

CHAPTER IX.

A hundred souls in one instant of dread
Are hurried over the deck.

DURING the few moments following the arming of the convicts on board the "Clytemnestra" a perfect babel reigned.

The firing of shots, the yells and curses of the escaped prisoners, the shouts of the sailors and of such of the marines off guard as had not been thoroughly drugged by their perfidious comrade, made up a scene of wild confusion and horror.

The man at the wheel deserted his post and the vessel swung round and lay to motionless in the calm, windless air.

Parson Jim distributed his shots right and left, cutting down whoever stood in his way, and pushing towards the entrance to the cabin. His howling crew penetrated to nearly every part of the vessel, killing and making prisoners as they went.

The decks streamed with human blood.

The golden stars shone down upon a hideous spectacle of carnage and terror.

The captain, the officers who had retired to their rooms, and the passengers came trooping out into the saloon and swarmed up the companion-way.

The captain and one of the officers were shot down as they showed themselves.

The remainder retreated to the saloon in a panic.

Parson Jim and a score of his followers

poured down the companion-way into the main saloon.

During all this time Chandos had not been idle.

He had comprehended that this horde of outcasts would overcome all resistance, and become masters of the ship.

The fate of Gerda in such event would be a horror. He would save her, or die with and for her.

Setting his teeth together, he resolved that she should die by his own hand rather than survive her capture.

A plan of escape, however, came to him like an inspiration.

As the convicts swarmed out of the hold, most of them making for the magazine, he made a swift rush in the direction of the quarter-deck. A sailor, marking his approach, fled, with a yell, before him.

A few swift bounds brought Chandos alongside the fugitive.

Seizing the man's collar in a fierce grip, he brought the seaman to an abrupt halt. The latter gave himself up for lost.

"Do you want to save your life?" said Chandos, in a stern, fierce whisper. "Come, then. Help me to lower a boat. Lively!"

The sailor breathed again. The pair sped to the quarter-deck, which was becoming deserted. The now becalmed vessel and the general confusion favoured the manoeuvre.

A boat was safely lowered from the davits and only a rope attached it to the ship.

"Now for provisions," cried Chandos. "Kegs of water and biscuits. Lively, my man. No time is to be lost!"

The sailor, in awe of the yellow-jacket, obeyed unquestioningly.

Chandos accompanied him to the store-room. Kegs of water and biscuits, with such other provisions as were conveniently at hand, were brought up and lowered into the boat. Two or three hasty trips sufficed to procure a goodly quantity of stores, but what they were Chandos had not time to ascertain.

Every minute was of the most vital importance to him.

Upon the forth trip, when the stout seaman was heavily laden with boxes and bottles, he was shot dead by one of the convicts, who was emerging from the magazine.

Chandos caught up the sailor's burden and transferred it to the small boat.

Then he dashed down into the cabin, the convicts not yet having penetrated thither.

The captain and one of the officers hurried past our hero, not seeing him in their alarm and bewilderment, and rushed up to meet their fate, as above stated.

The passengers and one surviving officer retreated to the cabin. Chandos burst in upon them in his yellow jacket, his face white as death, his eyes blazing like a bombshell.

The doctor drew his pistol. Miss Pelham threw up his arm and the weapon was discharged harmlessly.

"Do you not see?" she cried. "It is Ralph—"

"Come to save you or die with you," cried Chandos. "The marines and the crew are overpowered or killed. I have lowered a boat. Come!"

There was no time for hesitancy. A pandemonium reigned above. Gerda flew to her lover. The others pressed around him.

Not a second was lost. Chandos led the way to the deck. They had scarcely gained it, a friendly shadow of cloud or flapping sail screening them, when Parson Jim led his followers below.

Chandos fairly flew across the quarter-deck, keeping Gerda's hands in his. Mr. Pelham ran like a deer.

Lord Strathmere, half-wild with terror, kept near his brave young leader. Chandos lowered Miss Pelham into the boat. The men, three, including the officer, clambered after her.

"Wait one minute," said our hero, in a shrill whisper. "I will be back directly!"

He hurried again in the direction of the cabin.

Parson Jim and his fellows were searching every stateroom for the passengers who were supposed to be somewhere in hiding. Chandos's yellow jacket was a perfect protection, as he ran into the cabin, apparently upon the same quest as the others.

He looked in one or two staterooms and found what he sought—a bundle of masculine garments hanging against the wall. For this he had risked everything.

With it under his arm, and with a knife and pistol, and a few other trifles snatched from the cabin-table on his way out, he returned safely to the quarter-deck.

His delay had been brief, but it had nearly been fatal to him.

Lord Strathmore had been bold in crime, as we have seen, but, like many bold criminals, he was essentially a coward.

Chandos had scarcely disappeared from the quarter-deck, when a fiercer yell than any that had yet been heard came from the cabin. Lord Strathmore drew out his pocket-knife.

"There is no use in waiting here and risking our lives," he exclaimed. "Let us be off."

"I will not go!" cried Miss Pelham, springing up, and seizing the rope, her eyes flashing through the gloom. "If you will not wait for Ralph I will climb back to the deck."

Her clear, indignant tones attested that she would do as she said.

"Gerda!" implored her father. "This is madness. Let us escape while we can!"

"Go!" said the girl, calmly. "But if you go without Ralph you must leave me."

The banker groaned. Lord Strathmore gnashed his teeth in rage and terror.

A minute of breathless waiting, of intense listening, of agonised expectation, and then hurrying feet were heard above them, and the grey-haired old ship's doctor, more dead than alive, was lowered into the boat.

Chandos had just rescued him from the hands of the Bruiser, whom he had killed in the rescue. Then Chandos himself lightly descended, having loosed the rope, and let it fall into the boat.

He seized a pair of oars and drew away as silently as possible from the ship.

For some minutes not a word was spoken in the boat. Then Chandos, resting on one oar, groped about for a second pair of oars. They were found in the bottom of the boat.

The officer took possession of these, fitted them into the oarlocks, and began to pull steadily, keeping time with the rowing of Chandos.

Every pull at the oars visibly increased the distance from the ship. Lights were seen flashing about the vessel, and the yells and shouts of the convicts resounded upon the still night air.

The escape of the passengers was not discovered for many minutes, the absolute possession of the vessel contenting most of the men, who penetrated to the store-room and distributed whiskey in unlimited quantities, establishing a frightful orgy.

Parson Jim himself drank several glasses of brandy while prosecuting the search, and it was a full half hour before he arrived at the conclusion that the passengers had escaped.

The discovery of the absence of the small boat immediately followed.

"We'll lie to till morning," said Parson Jim, "and then we'll pick 'em up. They can't get far away in a small boat. Come on, boys. Let us make a night of it."

When the boat had attained the distance of a mile or more from the ship Chandos relaxed his hold upon the oars and groped again in the bottom of the boat.

"There should be a mast and sail here," he said.

"There is one," responded the officer, Mr. Gray. "We can ship it in no time."

It was found and slipped into its place. The oars were stowed in their former position. The sail was spread to the light breeze, and Mr.

Gray sat with his hand upon the tiller, steering.

Chandos bent over the good old doctor, who was still weak and unnerved by the Bruiser's assault.

A little attention helped to revive him, and he presently sat up.

Lord Strathmore was loudly complaining of his misfortunes.

Mr. Pelham sat as if stunned. Chandos resumed his seat, and Gerda nestled close beside him in the gloom, her hand slipped into his under cover of her dress-folds.

The contact of those cold, clinging fingers thrilled Ralph Chandos with new life. The others lamented their misfortunes; he was only conscious that he was free once more—free, and with the girl he loved.

For an hour Mr. Gray kept his place at the tiller, and then Chandos relieved him. The sky was still overcast, only a few stars gleaming from out the dusk; the "Clytemnestra" was long since lost to sight, and the breeze was freshening.

The little boat flew over the waters like a gull.

At Chandos's movement, Mr. Pelham aroused himself from his silence and stupor, and his blanched and haggard face lighted up with a quick, bright glow as his eyes rested upon his daughter.

He put out his arms and drew her to him with a deep and yearning tenderness, and said hoarsely:

"It is to you, Chandos, I owe my child's escape from a fate worse than death! May Heaven bless you!"

"It is to Chandos we all owe our lives!" cried Dr. Marsh. "For his gallantry and unselfishness to-night may Heaven reward him."

"He will not lose by it," said Mr. Gray. "We will all remember it to his credit when we get to Sidney. His noble deed of to-night will mitigate his future end there."

Chandos shivered.

Lord Strathmore was silent. There was no gratitude in his guilty soul towards his unfortunate cousin.

Chandos had saved his life from the convicts, but his hatred and greed were in no wise softened or lessened; no impulse came to him to falter in his frightful plot against the innocent youth. On the contrary, the praises heaped upon our hero annoyed and incensed him.

"I do not see how he could well have done less," he observed, coldly. "He meant to escape himself: it was as easy to allow us to escape with him. Why did he not betray the convicts' plots to the military guard? Why did he not warn the officers, and allow the ship to be saved?"

"I had no time," answered Chandos. "I did not know of the plot until to-night."

"That's a likely story," sneered Lord Strathmore.

Chandos flushed hotly.

"I have not mingled with the convicts," he said, with a quiet dignity that was a rebuke to his enemy. "Until to-night I have slept in the hospital. I knew nothing whatever of the plot until it was too late to give the alarm."

"It is a most mysterious thing," said Mr. Gray, "that the convicts should be able to seize the ship. Where were the soldiers?"

"Many of them were drugged and asleep. One of the officers of the guard was a brother of one of the convicts, and was the head and front of the conspiracy," said Chandos. "He unlocked the door of the magazine; he gave the signal to the convicts, and made their way easy for them."

Mr. Pelham groaned, and drew his daughter closer to his breast. When he remembered the hideous faces of the wretches on board the ship, it seemed to him that Gerda had been saved by a miracle.

"The scoundrels must be upset by our escape," said Lord Strathmore, gloomily. "They will probably make a great search for us in the morning. They are not likely to let the Governor-General of Australia slip through their

fingers quite so easily. And they will be bent upon securing Miss Pelham. I own to the gravest apprehensions for the morning."

Those apprehensions were shared by the others, but Chandos kept up a brave front, and assumed a cheerfulness that imposed upon one, at least—Miss Pelham—who presently dropped asleep in her father's arms.

Her father, overcome with weariness and fright, dozed uneasily.

Lord Strathmore conversed with Dr. Marsh in a low tone for awhile, and then assumed an easy attitude and went to sleep.

The doctor's eyes closed wearily. His wounds had left him weak, and his slumbers soon became profound.

"You had better sleep also," said Chandos, addressing Mr. Gray. "I will attend to the boat, and keep watch."

"I don't mind a nap," replied the officer, "if you'll promise to waken me in time to take my turn at the tiller. You and I will have to be the principal seamen, and it behoves us to take care of our strength. We are likely to need it all."

Chandos presently found himself alone, even Mr. Gray being asleep.

And then he took up his bundle of clothes, which he had taken from one of the state-rooms, and examined it.

It contained a full suit of grey tweed garments, which had evidently belonged to the doctor.

Chandos drew off his own hideous livery of crime, and put on these fresh garments. Then he gathered up his discarded convict-garb into a compact parcel and tossed it overboard, giving a great sigh of relief as it disappeared from his sight in the gloom.

His spirits rose now with every bound the boat gave as it sped onward. His convict-garb had weighed like an incubus upon his proud spirit.

Every glance of Gerda that had chanced to rest upon his yellow jacket had made him shrink within himself as if pierced with a frightful wound.

But now, with his changed clothing and his comparative freedom, he felt more like the Ralph Chandos of old, the happy, courted heir of Strathmore Park.

The night vigil was not long to him. He sat at the tiller, directing the course of the boat, with a sleepless care and vigilance.

Once or twice the words of some old song he had been wont to sing in the old days came to his lips.

He forgot his past—he had no thought of the future—he only knew that he was free again, that he was with Gerda.

The dawn broke palely over the waters. In the grey light, far or near, he could see nothing of the convict-ship. No sail of any description dotted the sea. The little boat was alone on the wide ocean.

As he turned from a long and keen survey of the scene, he met the gaze of Miss Pelham.

She had been the first to awaken, and had disengaged herself from her father's clasp without arousing him.

She blushed at sight of Chandos, but not a look betrayed that she observed the change in his attire.

She arose unsteadily, and advanced toward him, offering him her hand.

He took it and raised it to his lips in passionate, reverent love.

The girl blushed, but showed no sign of disapproval.

"How strange the sky and sea look at this hour!" she said, with a sweeping glance around her. "The ship is not in sight, thank Heaven! Do you think it will overtake us, Ralph?"

"No. We are well out of the reach of the convicts," answered Chandos. "They must have drifted during the night, even if they did not sail. They have no idea where to look for us. They will cruise these waters for a week but they will not find us."

His tone of confidence reassured Miss Pelham.

"But if they did find us?" she said, after a moment's pause.

"They should never take you alive, Gerda," answered Chandos, gravely. "I give you my word for that."

The girl flashed a loving, grateful look at him.

And now she noticed, in the increasing light, what she could not have marked on the previous day, nor in the night, how greatly he was changed from the happy, light-hearted heir of Strathmere Park.

There were stern lines about his face; he was haggard and worn and thin; his bright, blonde beauty of which she had been so proud was dimmed and hardened, but there was a new character in his visage, a new and rare nobility of expression, and his grave, stern eyes, with the haughty gleam in their steel-blue depths, mirrored a soul that had attained to grandeur through suffering.

There was power in every line of his countenance; his misfortunes had not soured him, but had strengthened and ennobled him. Gerda felt a new respect and admiration mingling with her love for him.

"I hope," she whispered, "that some American vessel will pick us up and carry us to America. You could stay in America then, Ralph, while I should return to England to hunt out your uncle's murderer?"

"We will not think of the future, Gerda," replied Chandos, softly. "For the present we are safe and together. I found your note on the deck and read it below. My brave, trusting, loving darling! I can never despair so long as you are true to me!"

He put one arm around her, and their lips met in a long, clinging kiss.

A sound startled them. Gerda started, and beheld Lord Strathmere, broad awake, sitting upright, and regarding her with amazement.

The sneer on his cruel lips and the unmistakable anger in his eyes overwhelmed her with confusion.

She drew away from her lover, who composedly turned his attention to the tiller, upon which, all this while, his left hand rested.

"It seems to me that Miss Pelham forgets herself," said Lord Strathmere, coolly.

Before Gerda could answer, her father roused himself, and exclaimed:

"How? What is that? Who was speaking to me?"

"No one, my dear sir," replied Lord Strathmere, smoothly. "It is a pity you didn't wake up a minute earlier, Mr. Pelham. You would have witnessed a very remarkable scene."

"And what was that?" asked the banker, sitting upright, and staring around him. "Is the ship in sight?"

"No—nothing so terrible as that. Only a lovers' kiss," sneered Lord Strathmere. "The heiress of Pelham Wold and a convict clasped in each other's arms—that's all."

Mr. Pelham reddened with anger. The mocking tone of the baron cut him deeply.

Lord Strathmere had become the object of his admiration, and his dearest hope was to see Gerda Baroness Strathmere.

He turned to his daughter with a severer countenance than he had ever before exhibited to her.

"Can this be true?" he ejaculated. "Gerda, come and sit by me. And remember the difference between you and Chandos."

"He saved our lives last night, papa. Think where we should be now but for him."

"Think what he is!" exclaimed her father. "A convict, on his way to the penal colonies of Australia! He is condemned to penal servitude for life! Think of it! Let there be no more kisses, Gerda! Your fate and his are as far asunder as the poles. Chandos, if any of the instincts of a gentleman remain in your breast, do not seek to keep alive in Miss Pelham's heart any surviving spark of her unhappy attachment to you. I trust to your honour to treat her with cold formality henceforth!"

Chandos bowed coldly, but did not reply.

Gerda arose and approached her father, her lovely young face aglow with indignation.

"I became betrothed to Ralph Chandos with your consent, papa," she said, in a low tone. "His misfortunes have but strengthened my fidelity to him. I cannot take back the love I gave him unless he proves unworthy of it, and that he has not done and can never do. He is a convict, but he is innocent of crime. He was not his uncle's murderer. He suffers for some other, and by the enmity of that other. Papa, he saved our lives last night. Be kind to him for my sake," she added, pleadingly.

The banker was touched by her little appeal, but a glance at Lord Strathmere confirmed his wavering resolution.

"Remember the gulf between you and Chandos," he exclaimed. "It is a gulf that can never be bridged over. He is a convict—a murderer—a foul assassin. I will not have you near him. Remember!"

Chandos's head still drooped and his face could not be seen. Gerda's glances, turning from him baffled, rested upon Lord Strathmere, taking him unawares.

She started at the cruel exultation upon his swarthy visage, at the triumphant gleam of his black eyes—started as if a serpent had bitten her.

And for the next hour she sat strangely silent and thoughtful, busy with a problem as new to her as it was terrible.

When Mr. Gray awakened and took his place at the tiller Chandos proceeded to open certain of the kegs and boxes, and to distribute the morning rations.

By this time the sun was rising, and still nowhere, far or near, could be seen a trace of the convict ship.

Lord Strathmere took his food grumblingly, as if conceiving himself injured by the absence of his morning rolls and coffee.

Mr. Pelham, who was something of an epicure, sympathised with him. The others, however, made the best of the situation and ate their biscuits and drank the brackish water thankfully, not forgetting to express their gratitude to Chandos for his thoughtfulness in providing them.

Lord Strathmere had noticed our hero's change of garments, and after breakfast he took occasion to express his disapproval thereof.

"Chandos is quite right," said the good old doctor, before our hero could answer. "The clothes he has on are mine and he is quite welcome to them. We are not on the ship now, my lord; we are fellows in misfortune, not keepers and prisoner."

"And whatever Chandos has been," said Mr. Gray, "we must not forget that we owe our lives to him, and that he is a gentleman by birth and breeding. Once we get out to Australia he will find that his heroic rescue of us will greatly mitigate his lot."

"You seem willing to overlook his treacherous crime of assassination—the crime that made him a convict," sneered Lord Strathmere. "As a public officer, I cannot forget or overlook it, the more particularly as he is, unfortunately, my kinsman."

"We will not discuss the question of his guilt or innocence," said Dr. Marsh, quietly. "We are not judges, but fellow-sufferers. It seems to me that our future wears a dubious look. Let us discuss our situation. We are at sea in a small boat, with a store of provisions sufficient to last us a fortnight, I should judge. We must be in the track of vessels. If the convicts do not pick us up, we stand a chance to be rescued by some passing ship. But we may drift about for weeks without seeing a ship."

"We will hope for the best," said Chandos, cheerfully. "The Providence that has guided us so far will not abandon us."

His cheerfulness was infectious, and a more hopeful spirit prevailed.

The fact that they had escaped death at the hands of the convicts made their present situation the easier to bear.

The sun rose higher and higher, and the wind lessened, until the air became oppressively sultry.

Chandos contrived an awning with a blanket his assistant had deposited in the boat, and under its shelter Miss Pelham, her father, Lord Strathmere, and the doctor gathered.

Mr. Gray and Mr. Chandos took their turns in management of the boat.

Our hero's skill as a yachtman was of great advantage to him now, and Mr. Gray deferred to him as to a superior.

In truth, Chandos had been born for a leader, and, in spite of his gentle courtesy and unwillingness to take charge of affairs he found himself virtually captain.

The boat glided on through the hot, glaring sunshine slowly, her speed sometimes scarcely exceeding that of a snail, it seemed.

The sea was like a glittering mirror. The sun, like a great brazen shield, unveiled by a single cloud, poured out its fiery splendours with torturing heat that was almost unbearable.

The impromptu awning was many times taken down and dipped into the sea, and again suspended dripping with moisture.

Languid as Miss Pelham must have felt, she made herself the life of the company.

To be adrift in a small boat with her lover seemed a thousand-fold better to her than to be again on the ship with him a prisoner in the hold.

Her spirits were lighter than they had been for months. She pointed out every gull, every flying-fish; she was continually on the lookout for a sail.

She asked questions, and the others grew interested in answering. The escape of the previous night was discussed; the probable disposal of the ship; the future course of the convicts; the possibilities of rescue; with many other questions that naturally presented themselves.

"The ship is not yet in sight," said Mr. Pelham, when the noon rations were served. "We shall escape her."

About one o'clock the wind began to rise and blow fitfully, and the boat made fine progress.

As the afternoon deepened, a shadow began to be perceptible upon Chandos's face.

Only Mr. Gray knew the meaning of that shadow; he, too, had marked the ominous clouds gathering upon the eastern horizon, and knew that a storm was brewing.

About six o'clock the wind died again, and an ominous calm held the sea in a deathly stillness. A sickly, yellow hue, became spread over everything, sky and waters.

It was as though one were looking through smoked glass.

The evening rations were served. Then the awning was taken down.

It was now quite dark, and Chandos laid the blanket beside Miss Pelham to serve as a wrap in case of need.

"The sun is blazing yet," said Lord Strathmere. "Why not have the awning up until dusk?"

The sickly yellow light was thickening into a strange sort of haze.

"We're making all snug for a storm, my lord," said Mr. Gray. "We're going to have a rouser."

A long, faint moan crept along the sea as if to confirm his declaration.

Chandos began to close-reef the sail. In a few moments all was made snug, and the little boat was ready for the gale.

Chandos and Mr. Gray proceeded to lash the kegs securely into place, and filled the lockers and fastened them.

"There is nothing more to be done," said Mr. Gray, looking anxiously to windward. "We shall have a big blow—a regular cyclone. I would rather be on the ship than in this cockle-shell, but we may come out all right."

"We must have the sails ready for bailing," said Chandos, promptly. "Luckily, they were kept in the boat. We have no grave cause for apprehension. I have noticed that this boat is

built in water-tight compartments. She'll ride the waters like a duck. We have only to cling to her and keep her right side up."

The sun was lost to view; the night was coming on with strange rapidity. A death-like hush held sea and air in a trance. Lord Strathmore began to feel uneasy and apprehensive. Mr. Pelham uttered his regrets that he had ever left England.

Gerda sat pale and calm, brave as any young lioness, close beside her father, and her lovely face shone out of the yellow gloom upon her lover like a star.

He knew of what she was thinking. If they were to perish, they would perish together, and his steel-blue eyes flashed back a sharp response, at once tender, passionate, loving and reassuring.

Another faint moan crept over the hushed waves—as if nature were in terror over her coming convulsion.

The yellow darkness deepened.

Suddenly a wild, eldritch screech thrilled the air, sounding like the cry of a demon. A minute later the storm came on in its awful fury.

(To be Continued.)

NIGHT DISTRESS SIGNALS.

UNTIL the year 1873, vast as were the interests at stake, there was no recognised system of night signals to be shown by vessels in distress when in need of aid. Loss of lives and of valuable property was an almost daily occurrence through ships being wrecked, or foundered, or coming into collision with each other; yet the maritime authorities of this and other countries and the owners of shipping were contented with the vague and simple cry of alarm in the shape of a mere light, a flare, a burning tar-barrel; or, in a comparatively few of the larger class of ships, that of a rocket or a signal gun; and doubtless many and many a vessel, large and small, was lost for want of some recognised signal which should denote that life or property, or both, were endangered.

At last such a catastrophe occurred on the 22nd of January, 1873, when the English emigrant ship "Northfleet" was run into during the night, whilst at anchor off Dungeness, by the Spanish steamer "Murillo," and shortly after foundered; nearly 400 of those on board her being drowned on the occasion, although she was surrounded by other ships, and the rockets which she discharged as signals of distress were seen by the coastguard and Lifeboat-men on shore, but were unheeded; it being a common custom for homeward bound ships to discharge rockets as signals for pilots, or as *feux-de-joie* on their safe return from distant lands.

Before the expiration of the year, a formula of "Signals of Distress" was included in the new "Merchant Shipping Act of 1873," and which came into operation on the 1st November of that year. Those signals have now an international character, having been adopted by most other countries.

The importance of establishing some universal system of "Signals of Distress" has often been urged, as well as the great advantage that would accrue if in any such system a clearly defined distinction were to be made between signals representing danger to life and those signifying danger to property only.

Thus, for want of such distinction, a steam tug or hovelling boat might proceed to a wrecked vessel on an outlying bank, in reply to signals of distress, to find on arrival at the scene of the disaster that she was fast breaking up, with her crew clinging or lashed to her rigging, and a heavy broken sea all around, into which neither tug nor hovelling boat could be safely taken, and there being no time then to return to the shore, many miles distant, to bring out the Lifeboat to save the ill-fated crew.

It has been suggested that a simple and unmistakable distinction, such as we have indicated, could be readily found by adaptation of the two coloured lights red and green, already

in use on board all ships to enable other vessels to ascertain their position and the direction of their course. It was proposed that red, as the blood colour, should be universally made to signify danger to life, whether in the shape of a simple red light, shown from a lantern, or of a rocket bursting with a red star, or of any other description of firework, as a night signal; and a red flag by day; whilst green should represent danger to property only.

The night distress signals are:

1. A gun fired at intervals of about a minute.
2. Flames on the ship (as from a burning tar-barrel, &c.).
3. Rockets or shells of any colour or description fired one at a time at short intervals.

The Act further decrees that if any master of a vessel should exhibit any of the above signals without being really in distress, he shall be liable to pay compensation for any labour, risk, or loss occasioned by his doing so, which expenses, however, they have persistently resisted.

As far as they go these signals may be sufficient, but they do not meet the evil to which we have referred, which a distinction of colour would do.

An experienced officer, Captain W. M. Pengeley, of H.M. late Indian Navy, and now Dock Master at Penarth, a port of Cardiff, has suggested the adoption of the familiar pyrotechnic light, called a "Roman Candle," in lieu of the rocket, as being much more easily managed in small vessels and boats, and we think there is much force in his argument.

"Roman Candles" throw up a series of fireballs to a considerable height, at short intervals between each, and, being unlike any other description of firework, would be readily distinguishable, whilst they would undoubtedly be much easier ignited and managed than a rocket, which requires to be adjusted to its staff, and will sometimes separate from it before attaining any height in the air, by which its flight is curtailed. In truth, rockets are practically useless on board small merchant vessels and boats.

Captain Pengeley proposes that the balls thrown up should be detonating, which might be an advantage when the help required was not more than one or two miles distant; but combined with the system suggested, the fireballs thrown up being red and green, the latter to be used when property only is at stake, and the former when the Lifeboat's aid was required, we think they would be admirably calculated to effect the desired object. In fact, the definition by colour might be usefully still further extended; thus green fire-balls might signify that towing was needed; blue ones, a pilot; plain or white ones, men and boats; and red ones a Lifeboat's help; whilst the rockets bursting with single stars of similar colours might have the same signification.

We think the time has come for a revision of the night signals established by the Merchant Shipping Act, 1873. We acknowledge that it would be a serious evil to change any system of signals except at long intervals of time, just as it would be so to change the character or position of light-houses or light-ships; but, on the other hand, when an evil or an imperfection is fully established it would equally be a folly, from a mere spirit of conservatism, to perpetuate it.

We therefore earnestly invite the attention of ship-companies, firms, and individual ship-owners, and above all of the Marine Department of the Board of Trade, to the subject, with a view to its reconsideration, and if practicable, to a revised and improved system of night "Signals of Distress."

We cannot better define the principles which we think should be kept in view in any such revision than in the following sentences, which were contained in an article on this subject published some four years since in "The Lifeboat Journal":

"1st. It is indispensable that signals of distress should be few in number and readily distinguishable from all other signals, especially those shown in the night; since persons having

to interpret them on the land would in general have no code of signals to refer to, but would have to trust to their memories alone."

"2ndly. They should not be of an expensive or unwieldy character, or of a kind requiring skillfulness in their use, or they would not be available for all classes of vessels."

"3rdly. It would be desirable, as far as possible, to utilise articles already on board rather than to provide new ones unavailable for any other use."—National Lifeboat Institution, February, 1878.

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ALEX had no time to plead to her enemy for mercy, or to entreat her silence.

Lady Markham, feeling that she had actually proved the girl a scheming adventuress, seized her by the arm and hurried her to the broad steps, through the wide, deserted hall, and into the drawing-room.

Lady Vivian was walking to and fro with slow and stately tread.

She paused and regarded the intruders in surprise.

Alex was pale as death; her sapphire eyes were burning; her lovely young face was woful, desperate, and despairing.

There were traces of tears upon her cheeks; her aspect was wild and frightened.

Lady Markham, on the contrary, presented a picture of triumph.

She had truly believed Alex to be false and designing, and she rejoiced to find her opinion apparently confirmed.

The old lady's eyes glittered with a new hardness and coldness, and her thin lips were a malicious and exulting smile.

"What does this mean?" asked Lady Vivian, regarding her chaperone with displeasure.

"It means, dear Lady Vivian," said Lady Markham, "that this girl has been holding a secret appointment with a man upon your private grounds. It means that she has just parted from him with a most lover-like embrace. I myself saw her lying on his breast. I saw and heard him kiss her a hundred times. And the man was not Lord Kingscourt."

She loosened her grasp upon Alex, who stood in a drooping attitude, her eyes downcast, her breast heaving.

The displeasure upon Lady Vivian's countenance deepened to sternness, but it was directed against the accuser instead of the accused.

"I cannot see," said her ladyship, coldly, "what interest you can have, Lady Markham, in Miss Strange's private affairs. We will not discuss them, if you please."

Alex flashed a grateful look at Lady Vivian.

Lady Markham's face plainly expressed her amazement.

"My dear Lady Vivian," she exclaimed, "surely you cannot have understood me. This girl has told you that she is a stranger in England; that she knows no one in the country except Lord Kingscourt. She has basely deceived you. I saw her but now in the arms of a man who was a stranger to me. Let her deny it if she can!"

"I am quite sure that you must be mistaken, Lady Markham."

"Miss Strange?" cried the old lady, turning upon Alex, "will you dare deny that I just witnessed your loving parting with some stranger?"

Alex did not answer.

Something in her silence startled Lady Vivian.

"She dare not deny it!" exclaimed Lady Markham, triumphantly. "She is bold enough, but not sufficiently brazen to deny the truth to my very face! Lady Vivian, this girl is a viper, and it is your duty to know and prove the fact. You have made her the companion and social equal of your guests; it is your duty to prove to yourself that you have not forced upon your young guests an improper associate! I am actuated

by no dislike of Miss Strange although I dis-trusted her from the first. If she can prove herself innocent of wrong doing, I will gladly beg her pardon and make amends for my injus-tice!"

The old lady's manner betokened her sincerity. "Miss Strange is in this house for some scheme and purpose of her own!" declared Lady Mark-ham, with energy, as no one answered her. "She has told you that she is a stranger in England, knowing no one, yet she meets a man in your grounds and parts with him like a lover. Now who is that man? Whoever he is, he is leagued with Miss Strange in some scheme against you, Lady Vivian. Let the girl deny it if she can!"

Alex was still drooping and silent.

"I am positive that you are mistaken, Lady Markham," said Lady Vivian, in a tone of con-viction. "You have seen some one of the maids parting with her lover, and have mistaken her for Miss Strange!"

"I seized the young lady and brought her in directly without losing sight of her," said Lady Markham, grimly. "A mistake was impossible! I see that you will not believe anything against Miss Strange except by her own confession. So from her own word of mouth shall she be con-demned. She will not dare utter a falsehood to me. Miss Strange," and she turned upon the girl in stern accusing, "did you not meet a man in these grounds to-night? Did I not see you part from him?"

Alex raised her sweet, sorrowful eyes at last, and Lady Vivian marked the hunted look in them, and the desperate expression upon the lovely young face.

The pale lips parted as if to speak, but no words issued from them.

"Silence is confession!" said Lady Mark-ham.

Still Alex did not speak.

A brief but deadly silence reigned in the long drawing-room.

Lady Vivian's complexion paled.

Why did not the girl deny the insulting and terrible charges brought against her? Was it because she was too proud?

"Miss Strange," continued Lady Markham, "can you deny that you have entered Lady Vivian's service in pursuance of some private scheme totally unconnected with the earning of a salary?"

A quick start from Alex, a further whitening of the girl's lips, a shrinking of the delicate figure, told that this question was an arrow that had shot straight at a mark.

"Miss Strange," said Lady Vivian, kindly, "I beg you to believe that I am no party to this scene. I do not doubt you, my dear, and I am con-vinced that Lady Markham is labouring under some mistake. My old friend, no doubt, seems harsh and cruel, but I believe her to be sincere in her convictions and utterances. I know that she would accept your denial of her charges as proof of her mistake.

"Will you not, for my sake, Alex, subdue your pride and outraged feelings sufficiently to give her this denial? I do not ask it for my-self; I trust you and believe in you. But for your own sake, my dear, tell Lady Markham that she is mistaken. You are a stranger in England; it is impossible that you should have met with any male friend in my grounds to-night."

Alex's head was no longer drooping. Her tender young eyes were resolute in their mourn-ful, steadfast gaze.

Lady Vivian, her own unconscious mother, seemed transformed into her judge.

She felt a wild impulse to fling herself upon that white and jewelled breast and claim her ladyship's love as rightfully her due, to sob out her own sad story, but the thought of her father in deadly peril, his fate hanging upon her prudence and discretion, nerved her to self-command.

Truthful to the core of her being, she could not give the denial demanded of her.

There was no guilt in her expression, but a piteousness of appeal that sent a pang to Lady Vivian's heart.

"I cannot deny the charges which Lady Mark-

ham has brought against me," she said, tremu-lously; "but I am not unworthy, Lady Vivian. I am not an adventuress. Believe in me still, I implore you! Trust in me! Some day, per-haps, I may explain; but I cannot now!"

"You did not part with a man upon my grounds to-night with kisses and embraces, Alex. I am quite sure of that," said Lady Vivian.

The red blood dyed the girl's cheek in a vivid stain.

"I do not deny it," she said, bravely.

"Then your friend was Lord Kingscourt? There is no especial harm, my dear child—"

"The man was not Lord Kingscourt," inter-rupted Lady Markham, positively. "I saw that he wore a beard, and the earl wears only a moustache."

"He was not Lord Kingscourt," acknowledged Alex, desperately. "Oh, my lady, spare me! If you could only have faith in me yet a little longer!"

The Lady Vivian seemed perplexed and trou-bled.

Her faith in Alex was not to be lightly shaken.

She had grown to love the girl with a pas-sionate tenderness inexplicable to herself.

That there was some mystery about her young companion she plainly saw.

But how could she believe evil of a girl with a face so pure, so innocent, and with eyes so full of truth and uprightness?

The Lady Vivian's heart led her in one direc-tion, her reason and knowledge of the world in another.

In her indecision and perplexity she cut the scene short.

"We will not discuss the matter further to-night," she said, gravely, "at least, not quite so publicly. Alex, I will join you in your room presently."

She dismissed her young companion with her usual kindness, and Alex glided away, departing in silence to her own room.

"Lady Markham," said the Lady Vivian, on finding herself alone with her chaperone, "I must beg that this painful scene, and the event leading to it, remain a secret with you. Our guests must know nothing of it."

"I shall be silent."

"It is quite possible that the matter may be easily explained," said Lady Vivian. "There may be a profligate brother, or some unworthy relative who has been living in England, and whom Miss Strange does not like to own. She will explain everything to me, no doubt, but you and others have no right to her confidence. If she satisfies me you must be satisfied."

"I shall be," said Lady Markham, sincerely.

"I am sorry, my dear Vivian, to have pained you so deeply through this girl, but I felt it to be my duty to bring the proofs of her deceit before your notice. You will forgive me the sorrow I have brought upon you?"

Lady Vivian bowed assent, and again enjoined secrecy upon her chaperone.

Lady Markham withdrew, and Lady Vivian paced the floor for many minutes, and at length slowly ascended the stairs and tapped at Alex's door.

The girl admitted her. The red eyes and tear-stained cheeks showed that the girl had been crying bitterly.

Lady Vivian crossed the room and sat down in a low chair by the hearth, and motioned Alex to approach her.

The girl ran to her and knelt at her side, and hid her face upon her ladyship's knees. Lady Vivian stroked the tawny ripples of hair with a lingering, caressing touch.

"You know that I have learned to love you, Alex?" she said, softly.

A slight movement of Alex's head expressed assent.

"You know, too, that I cannot believe evil of you. I think you are in some trouble which I might perhaps lighten. I am entitled to your confidence, my dear, and I entreat you to con-fide in me. Who was this man you met to-night?"

"I cannot tell you—not even you!" cried the

girl, raising her head and speaking with pas-sionate sorrow. "Oh, Lady Vivian, if I could, I would tell you all, but I cannot! I cannot!"

"Your father is in Greece. You told me that you had no other relatives than he. This man was not Lord Kingscourt, nor could he have been your relative. Who was he?"

"I cannot tell you."

Lady Vivian's brows grew sad and troubled.

"You are but a child in your experience of the world, Alex," she said, softly and lovingly, "and you may have become entangled in some way with some unworthy person. Confide in me as if I were the mother you lost so many years ago, and let me help you. Tell me—who was this man?"

"I cannot, Lady Vivian. Oh, it seems as if my heart were bursting! You will lose your faith in me, if it is not gone already, and I would rather die than lose your trust. The secret you ask for is not mine to tell," sobbed the girl, in sore distress.

Lady Vivian's eyes grew stern.

"You are a motherless girl, Alex," she said, "without a father to look after you, and I should be a poor friend indeed if I failed to demand your confidence, or suffered you through your inexperience to fall into some evil person's wiles. You love Lord Kingscourt. Does he know of this night's visitor?"

"No—no!"

"Shall you dare tell him?"

"No, Lady Vivian, not for worlds!"

"What am I to think? My heart clings to you, my poor child, but I must know this secret of yours. I must know it for your own good, even more than for my own satisfaction. A girl like you should have no such secrets. You can trust me safely; I will hold your confidence in-violable. I conjure you, Alex, tell me the whole truth. Explain the mystery."

The girl stood up, deathly white, her blue eyes glittering like stars.

"I cannot tell you," she reiterated. "Oh, Lady Vivian, what must you think of me? I would rather die than lose your good opinion, but I cannot give you my confidence."

Lady Vivian arose, white as the girl beside her.

"Where there is no confidence there can be no love!" said her ladyship, with icy coldness. "When you choose to give me the one I may return to you the other. In the meantime, let there be no more professions of endearment between us. You will go to Mrs. Ingestre to-morrow to be absent a fortnight. Should Mrs. Ingestre desire to keep you longer you will be at liberty to remain with her."

And with a sad good-night, and a look as of one terribly wounded, Lady Vivian bowed her haughty head and departed from the room.

The girl stood as if transfixed, gazing wildly after her.

"It is a virtual dismissal," she thought. "She will not let me return. I have forfeited her love, esteem, and companionship. Oh, Heaven, pity me! I have more than I can bear!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ALEX had no further opportunity for a private interview with Lady Vivian.

The girl slept little upon that unhappy night after her meeting with her father.

Anxiety for him, and grief at Lady Vivian's displeasure, made her restless and wakeful.

The tears she shed, hot and bitter, might well quench the light of her young eyes, and leave her white and spiritless, with a despairing expression infinitely touching to witness.

Felicie came in at an early hour of the morn-ing, before Lady Vivian had arisen, to assist Alex to dress.

Such had been the Frenchwoman's custom since the girl's arrival at Clyffe-bourne. The tiring-woman commented upon Miss Strange's pallor, and exclaimed:

"There must be something wrong in the air. My lady had one of her bad nights, such as she used to have so often. She fell asleep only an hour ago, and she will not waken for hours to

come, but will lie white and still, worn out with exhaustion. I had hoped that these so bad nights were over for my lady for ever."

Alex made no response, but the dull pain at her heart deepened into torture.

"My lady said that you would breakfast in your own room, mademoiselle," continued Felicie, brushing out the silken lengths of tawny hair. "She bade me tell you last evening that she wished you a pleasant visit at Mount Heron, and begged you to excuse her seeing you this morning, as she took leave of you last night. And she bade me say also, mademoiselle, that she hoped to receive a letter from you."

Alex bowed gravely; she could not speak. She read in Lady Vivian's message and refusal again to see her the sign of her ladyship's continued and severe displeasure.

"You are fortunate, mademoiselle," remarked Felicie, "to win my lady's love as you have done. I never knew her to take so great a liking for anyone before, never. I know it is hard for her to let you go to Mount Heron on this visit, but you will return before we go up to London, or to our home."

"I hope so," said Alex, sighing. "But Lady Vivian may not long want a companion, since she is to be married."

"True. She is to be married before Christmas; Pierre Renaud told me last night, and it is now November."

"So soon?" cried Alex, in a startled voice.

"So Pierre Renaud says. My lady keeps her own counsel still. She has not told me," declared Felicie, somewhat jealously. "I think the marriage will come later. How can she procure a suitable trousseau in such brief time? But Pierre says my lord told him, and it is likely to be true. If my lady marries she may still keep you with her, since she likes you so well."

"I could not stay if she were to marry again," interrupted Alex, hastily.

"If my lady marries," said Felicie, "I shall marry too. I have been loved by Pierre Renaud these twenty years, since he was valet to the late marquis, the murdered lord. I did not like him once, he was too gay, too much of a spendthrift, but he has fallen heir to a fortune, and will buy a château in France, and set up as a gentleman. He is very rich, and only stays with my lord marquis until his lordship's marriage, through affection. I shall have servants, mademoiselle, and a carriage, and he waited upon. Yet I cannot bear the idea of leaving my lady."

"Is Pierre really rich?" asked Alex, her thoughts turning upon the mystery of the Mount Heron tragedy. "Perhaps his fortune will not suffice for all these extravagances you mention."

"I thought of that myself, and demanded to see his bank-book. He brought it to me last evening. He has really much more in France, for which I had to take his word. It is odd that the old uncle should have made so much money," added Felicie, reflectively. "I knew the family well, on both the father's and the mother's side, and I never heard of this rich uncle of the mother. But the money is a fact one cannot doubt. And the end of it all is that I have promised to marry him when madame marries my lord."

Felicie assisted further at Alex's toilet, and the young girl thanked her for her services and kindness, bestowing upon her a liberal gratuity, which Felicie promptly declined.

"Keep it," said Alex, "and buy with it something as a present from me, Felicie. I may never return to Clyffebourne. One cannot read the future."

Felicie accepted the gold piece, and took her leave, after wishing Alex unlimited happiness and prosperity.

A servant presently appeared with Alex's breakfast.

She drank her coffee and trifled with a roll, but was too excited and troubled to have any appetite.

Felicie did not return.

No further message came from Lady Vivian. Lady Markham dropped in for a few moments to triumph over her fallen rival, but Alex was

too proud to show her sorrow or humiliation to her enemy.

It was nearly noon when the Mount Heron carriage arrived at Clyffebourne.

Alex descended at once and took her place in it, and was driven away from the house in which she had known so much of joy and drank so deeply of sorrow.

Her boxes had been sent to Mount Heron an hour or two earlier, by order of Lady Vivian, given the night before.

Alex leaned back upon the carriage-cushions and as the carriage turned into the shaded avenue, with a sudden, yearning impulse she looked out of the window and up at the Lady Vivian's room.

The curtains of that upper window were held back by a white hand, and Alex had a glimpse of Lady Vivian's superb face, half hidden among the draperies, looking out upon her. The girl caught her breath in a quick sob.

"The rose of success is guarded by a thousand thorns," she thought. "And every thorn seems to pierce to my very heart."

The day was pleasant.

The sun was shining; a brisk, bracing wind swept in from the Atlantic; the sea was in a glorious mood.

Sails dotted the restless waters in the distance.

The Bluff road, a marine parade in the season and at a later hour, was now deserted.

During the drive Alex had time to recover her calmness and nerve herself for the work before her.

She was going to Mount Heron in the firm conviction that Pierre Renaud was the murderer of her uncle, and with the determination to fasten the guilt upon him, with the help of that Providence which never sleeps, and which, sooner or later, avenges the innocent and punishes the guilty.

She had no definite plans; her course she left to circumstances and the inspiration of the moment.

The parade and pier-head at Mount Heron village were deserted.

The pretty marine villas facing the sea were, many of them, closed.

Most of the visitors had left the breezy little watering-place, and the band no longer played; the donkeys were not to be seen upon the sands; and a look of soberness replaced the recent air of festivity.

A flag was flying from the topmost tower of Mount Heron Castle which, perched upon its dizzy height, looked like some feudal stronghold.

The avenue of approach led through the park by a steep and winding ascent, and as it neared the summit, proceeded after a zig-zag fashion, similar to the old Roman road leading up and down the mountain sides between Sestra Levante and Spezzia, in Italy, but of course upon a smaller scale.

The park was left behind, and the bold bluff, with its balustraded terraces, rising like tables one above another, and covered with vegetation which grew thriftily in the soil that had been brought hither with infinite labour and expense, was at last gained.

The wind blew here in a gale.

The roar of the sea was like the sound of muffled artillery as it surged and raged against the rocks below.

The view was grand and imposing, appearing almost unlimited.

Alex drew a long breath of delight and enjoyment.

The carriage drew up in the porte-cochère, and a footman opened the door.

Alex ascended the broad marble steps, and the doors of her ancestral home flew open to admit her.

She entered the grand old baronial hall, hung with trophies of war and chase, and the hall-porter was about to guide her to the drawing-room, when Mrs. Ingestre, fat and unwieldy, but all eagerness and satisfaction, came forth to receive her.

The fact that Alex was a favourite of Lady Vivian was a passport to Mrs. Ingestre's favour.

The patronage of the duke's daughter was like the "hall-mark" upon silver—it stamped its recipient as valuable and of sterling worth.

Mrs. Ingestre had been "blue" all the morning.

She was lonely, and, after an hour's perusal of her favourite medical work, had discovered in herself the most alarming symptoms of a new and fatal malady.

Her decease appeared to her imminent. She had, in short, a most severe attack of hypochondria, and hailed in Alex a confidant of her physical distresses, a nurse, and a sympathising companion, all in one.

"You dear girl," she exclaimed, embracing her visitor with warmth. "How good of you to come to me so promptly. You find me quite ill this morning, Miss Strange, scarcely able to keep my head off my pillow. Only my indomitable will enables me to be up. If it were not for my invincible courage I should long before this have been in my lonely grave."

Alex expressed her sorrow at this state of affairs. Mrs. Ingestre's looks belied her professions.

Her full-moon face was red as poppies; her pendulous cheeks, her thick red lips, her rotund figure, might well have served as the model of health in its vilest and coarsest form.

"I will show you up to your room myself," said Mrs. Ingestre, hospitably. "It is a great exertion for me to mount the stairs, but I insist upon doing so. Don't try to dissuade me, my dear Miss Strange. I intend to make Mount Heron so delightful to you that nothing can tempt you to return to Clyffebourne."

She led the way up the broad staircase, along the great upper hall, to a spacious room that overlooked the sea.

Bed and bath rooms adjoined this sitting-room, which was luxurious in the extreme.

An immense bay window overhung the waters. In its great recess were writing and work-tables, easy-chairs, and ottomans.

Mrs. Ingestre drew aside the curtains of lace and satin, and let in the broad sunlight.

"I have been alone all day," she said, complainingly. "The gentlemen went out yesterday in the yacht and have not yet come in. But the vessel is in sight and making for harbour. They will be in, in the course of an hour or two, with this wind. They will be surprised to see you at dinner, Miss Strange. Neither Lord Mountheron nor Lord Kingscourt knew that you were to be here at present."

"Will the marquis be pleased?" asked Alex, a little uneasy.

"Oh, he does not concern himself greatly about me. He expressed his willingness to allow me a companion, and I haven't spoken of the matter to him since. He doesn't like to be troubled about small matters, Miss Strange, and household details, and I intend to make the most of my brief reign here. I suppose that Lady Vivian will soon take my place as mistress of the castle."

Alex removed her hat and wrappings. Her boxes were in her dressing-room, but her toilet required no change.

"Let me take you down to the morning-room," said Mrs. Ingestre. "You will have just as fine a view of the sea, and we shall be quite alone for some time to come."

They descended to the morning-room, a large, long apartment directly under the room assigned to Alex.

Mrs. Ingestre politely inquired after Lady Vivian, whom she regarded with awe and admiration, after Lady Markham and certain of the guests, and then branched forth into a harrowing description of her ills, predicting for herself a speedy demise.

The yacht's return to the harbour was not so soon as Mrs. Ingestre had predicted. The vessel tacked first upon one course, and then upon another, for several hours.

The two ladies lunched together, and then returned to their post of survey. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the yacht entered the harbour and came to anchor in the shelter of the break-water.

The gentlemen ascended the bluff by means

of a steep, long flight of steps out in the solid rock.

Lord Kingscourt passed on to his own rooms. Lord Mountheron entered the morning-room, in quest of his sister-in-law.

He was soft and delicate as ever, gentle and melancholy, with a sweetness of demeanour and a refinement of manner that well became him.

He was dressed in a yachting suit, an inspiration of Poole. A shadow swept over his mild face as he beheld Alex, but he greeted her with marked courtesy.

"Miss Strange will spend a fortnight with me, Rowland," said Mrs. Ingestre, "even if I do not succeed in keeping her with me altogether. Dear Lady Vivian will not require a companion after her marriage, and I rely upon you to use your influence towards helping me keep Miss Strange."

"I will use my influence in your behalf, you may be sure," replied the marquis, easily.

"Have you shown Miss Strange about the castle, Augusta? The terraces, the conservatories, hot-houses, the picture gallery, the ancient chapel and the ruins?"

"Not yet. You forget the state of my health. But I will send some one to show her all the various objects of interest, if I am unable to guide her. You know, of course, my dear," said Mrs. Ingestre, addressing Alex, "that Mount Heron is a great show-place, that tourists come from far and near to visit it, and that pictures have been made of the castle and the ruins? You have a great enjoyment before you, if you are romantic like most young people. The ruins are kept in good order, and are said to be haunted."

"By the ghost of some former lord of Mount-heron," said the marquis. "The servants will not visit the ruins after nightfall, and tell alarming stories of spectral lights and ghostly apparitions which some belated person has chanced to see."

"There are many traditions connected with Mount Heron," said Mrs. Ingestre. "There have been terrible deeds done within these hoary walls."

The marquis moved away, with a remark uttered in tones too low for Alex to hear.

(To be Continued.)

SOUND SLEEP.

ANY man who can bound out of bed as soon as he wakes of a midwinter morning is worth something; no fear of his not making his way through the world creditably, because he has the elements of a promptitude, decision and energy which guarantee success. To invalids we make a comfortable suggestion worth knowing. If you have force of will enough to keep you from taking a second nap—and it is the "second nap" which makes its baneful influence felt on multitudes—it is better for you to lie awhile and think about it, until that feeling of weariness passes out of the limbs which you so commonly feel. But to sleep soundly, and to feel rested and refreshed when you wake up of a morning, four things are essential:

1. Go to bed with feet thoroughly dry and warm.
2. Take nothing for supper but some cold bread and butter and a single cup of weak warm tea of any kind.
3. Avoid over fatigue of body.
4. For the hour preceding bedtime, dismiss every engrossing subject from the mind, and let it be employed about something soothing and enlivening in cheerful thankfulness.

ORIGIN OF THE LETTER STAMP.

THE alleged origin of the stamp had a tinge of romance in it. It was thirty-seven years ago that Rowland Hill, while crossing a district in the North of England, arrived at the door of an inn where a postman had stopped to deliver

a letter. A young girl came out to receive it; she turned it over in her hand and asked the price of postage. This was a large sum, and evidently the girl was poor, for the postman demanded a shilling. She sighed sadly, and said the letter was from her brother, and she had no money; so she returned the letter to the postman. Touched with pity, Mr. Hill paid the postage and gave the letter to the girl, who seemed very much embarrassed.

Scarcely had the postman turned his back when the young innkeeper's daughter confessed that it was a trick between her and her brother. Some signs on the envelope told her all she wanted to know, but the letter contained no writing. "We are both so poor," she added, "that we invented this mode of correspondence without paying for our letters." The traveller, continuing his road, asked himself if a system giving place to such frauds was not a vicious one. Before sunset Rowland had planned to organise the postal service on a new basis—with what success is known to the world.

OUR UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE.

SOME men, says the Rev. Mr. Wadsworth, are always, without seeming effort or thought, making other people happy. Like the bride under the apple-trees of Canticles, we sit under their shadow with great delight; meet them where you will, and their smiling faces, their cheerful voices, the springing foot, the silent pressure of the hand, encourage and comfort, like the ripple of cool waters on the sultry day, like the voice of the nightingale in the dreary night.

But there are others whose very presence depresses and saddens us. Oliver Goldsmith's Mr. Croaker, whom Lord Lytton reproduced in Mr. Wormwood, is as truly a representative man as Bunyan's Christian Pilgrim. We meet such people every day, and they have always some new distress for us. Their sweetest smile is suggestive of the neuralgia. They go home at night like an undertaker to a funeral, and children cease singing, and wives refrain from smiles.

They go abroad in the morning, like a Scotch mist from the highlands, to drizzle discontent in the street and market-place. They enter the house of God to render its songs of praise requiems, and its oil of joy ice-water; and their religious light shines before heaven's sunshine through stained glass, and the priest at the shrine looks like a variegated ghost, and the reverent worshippers like brindled hobgoblins. And thus, even in our spheres of secular life, we affect one another. Our simple presence diffuses either gloom or gladness—some like bright palms beside a fountain, and some like dark cypresses over a grave, yet all alike, and always "casting shadows."

COULD SHE BE PARDONED?

MORTEVILLE is a pretty seaside spot on the coast of Brittany.

Time was when stray artists or pilgrims, in search of the picturesque, alone knew it. A later time came when it was known of quiet people who wanted a summer retreat—people who belonged in "the world," but grew so tired of a residence therein, that for a few weeks at least during each year of busy, crushing, wearisome, aimless idleness, they longed to escape, and freshen their souls by a brief interview with Nature.

It was during one of these seasons—early in August—that Isabel Vaughan wandered thither with as few impediments as a rich young widow could manage to exist.

I think she had only her companion, two ladies' maids, a footman, a courier, and six-and-twenty boxes—the lapdogs, the birds, and the monkey not counting.

She was a great beauty, with an income which would once have been considered an enormous

fortune, regarded as capital—plenty of brains, high spirits, and good nature—though she often did foolish things—was frequently gloomy, and more frequently cross—like everybody else that ever I knew, whether rich or poor, young or old, wise or silly.

She liked admiration; she enjoyed the luxuries wealth gave her, and she was happy enough, only not so happy as she wished to be; but few people are; and Isabel was sufficiently sensible to admit that existence had already given her as much as she had a right to expect.

That she could want anything besides she knew was absurd; her dearest friend could not have been more contemptuous than she was of those yearnings, that somewhat vague discontent—only she was far too wise to allow any friend the opportunity to be contemptuous, for she kept her fancies religiously to herself, and those who thought they knew her best would have been the loudest to assert that she was utterly incapable of foolish dreams, and a wicked dissatisfaction with the bubbles and foam among which her associates lived satisfied.

In the grounds of the principal hotel there was a pretty cottage. Isabel had secured this in advance, and so could have all the privacy she might desire, yet avoid those annoyances which even rich people must endure when they attempt "housekeeping" in a place of that kind. She arrived in the afternoon with Mrs. Lorrimer, and met numerous acquaintances.

She left Mrs. Lorrimer on the sands talking inanities with a group of people, and passed on down the shore, rounded a point, and came upon a "bit," that she was thinking would make a pretty "motive" for a picture.

There was a bold sweep of headland—rocky and precipitous—with a circle of pine trees set on its front like a crown; below, the wreck of a brig, which had been dashed against the cruel rocks, during the spring tides; a group of red-shirted men and blue-petticoated women hauling in a fishing-boat; beyond, the purple sweep of ocean; a narrow line of intense light, defining the horizon; a single sail midway—the upper half, a sheet of silver; the lower, black as ink.

She turned her back on the sea, and walked towards a rise in the shore, from whence she fancied "the bit" would appear even more striking; but as she ascended the height she perceived that somebody had been in advance of her in appreciation of the view for artistic purposes.

One of the light-jointed easels, such as artists carry about in their summer wanderings, was placed in a convenient position—a canvas set upon it, a camp-stool at the foot. The owner of these possessions had left work and easel.

Isabel looked about to see if he or she was in sight, feeling a sudden, improper desire to inspect the production, just because she had no business so to do.

She walked on towards it; glanced up the hill, and on the top, saw a man standing, looking out across the sea. He was too far off to be recognisable, and the spoiled beauty thought:

"I may have a peep and be gone before he can get near—anyway, it is some professional, who ought to be flattered by my taking the trouble to look at his work."

So she went up to the easel and once stationed in front of the canvas she forgot everything else in her admiration of the newly-finished sketch, which had been executed with loving care, and was so much finer than she had expected, that, as I said, she stood there, oblivious of the fact, that the owner—at least, it was reasonable to suppose so—stood on the top of the hill, and must be able to see her, and the liberty she was taking.

In the spring she had purchased a couple of small pictures at the Paris Exposition which had greatly struck her fancy.

They were exhibited anonymously, and she had been unable to learn the name of the artist.

As she looked at the sketch on the easel she felt confident that it was a production by the same hand.

She was roused from her absorption by the



[THE ARTIST ASSERTS HIMSELF.]

sound of footsteps close behind her; she turned her head, and to her utter astonishment found herself confronting a gentleman who had the honour of ranking among her acquaintances.

"Mr. Severn!" she exclaimed.

"Mrs. Vaughan!" returned he.

Their surprise was evidently mutual. She spoke first. That was due to her own dignity after this brief but strange flutter which the sight of him had caused her. Before he could open his lips again she was saying:

"Now I know how people feel when they see a ghost! Good gracious, Mr. Severn! what business have you to appear in this unexpected fashion, and frighten one out of one's senses?"

"I beg pardon," returned he, quiet as possible—aggravatingly so. "But after all it is not my fault. I was here first, so the right of being astounded belongs to me! Who could have dreamed of seeing Mrs. Vaughan at Morteville?"

"Bless me, you have not bought the place, I imagine?" priding her wits, though annoyingly conscious that she had by no means recovered her composure.

"Even if I had I would give you permission to visit it," he said, laughing a little.

"I think we shall both owe apologies to somebody," she continued. "I wonder who the person may be?"

"Apologies! How so?"

"Why, to the artist," she replied, pointing toward the sketch. "Just look at it, and tell me if it is not fine. I came up out of curiosity, expecting to be punished for my rudeness by

the sight of some horrible amateur attempt such as I might have indulged in myself, and behold, this is what I find! Had you seen it already?"

"Yes, I had seen it," he replied, and his tone seemed to hold a certain disparagement of the object of her admiration.

"Do you know who did it?" she asked, so eager to find this out that she could not stop to quarrel with the way he spoke, though she certainly would have done so had not such been the case. "Where can the artist be hidden? I suppose, of course, it must be a she since I find you loitering in the neighbourhood, though with the usual injustice of a woman toward her own sex, I own, I cannot believe a feminine hand ever accomplished that breadth and boldness! So I suppose the artist has a wife, and you are here for the sake of her beaux yeux?"

She knew that she was talking nonsense, but no matter what she might say, anything was better than silence, because the meeting with this man had moved her strangely—filled her with a certain rage and self-impatience—also, because it was only the renewal of feelings which had beset her during the previous winter when she had known him in Paris, when for a time he had frequented her house, and met her elsewhere in the busy round of her idle life.

Then suddenly, as she had begun to think a good deal about the difference between him and the other man, whom her beauty or money attracted, he disappeared.

He had never made love to her or her fortune, she could say so much for him.

But the truth was, their acquaintance, and his

seeking of her society, had roused feelings in her mind of which she had believed herself incapable.

She had grown to like him. She had thought him attracted toward her, and his sudden disappearance had roused her from a pleasant dream—caused her great humiliation likewise.

But when she recalled the events of their acquaintance she was forced to acquit him of flirtation or coquetry.

He had been kind and attentive, and she had deceived herself, just as a silly girl might have done—that was all—and a very disagreeable truth it was to acknowledge.

But those things had happened months ago, and Isabel had long since decided that she had outlived her folly and could laugh at the species of romance which her fancy—of course her heart had had nothing, in reality, to do with the matter—had essayed to weave.

So it vexed her now, naturally enough, that the unexpected meeting with Henry Severn should have caused her sufficient agitation to warn her common sense that the idyl woven by her silly fancy was not so utterly unravelled and thrown aside among the ordinary odds and ends of cast-off life, usually as entirely forgotten as worn-out garments, as she had believed.

I give these explanations here because they passed through Isabel's mind, but for her to think them took so little space that the conversation went on with scarcely a break.

He had moved in front of the easel and stood looking for a few moments at the sketch.

"So you like it?" he said.

"I have told you forty times that I think it admirable," she cried. "Now will you tell me if you know who did it? I bought a couple of little gems at the spring exhibition which I am sure were by the same hand. I want to see the artist and thank him for the great pleasure he has given me."

"The artist is duly grateful," he replied, with a bow.

"Why, is it yours?" she exclaimed.

"I wish it were better worth owning since you are kind enough to want to know its author," he said, with a playfulness which would have been more successful if he could have managed to appear a little less glum.

It is an awkward word to write of one's hero, but he really did look glum, as if, man like, he were taking refuge from some sort of emotion in ill-humour.

Isabel noticed this and it restored her spirits because it put her on better terms with herself.

Since he was moved by this encounter—and he was—she told herself he was—she could feel less ashamed of the flutter (she would not employ a graver term) which it had caused her.

"Then my two pet pictures were yours also," she continued.

He bowed.

"I am so glad to find out. But, dear me, to think of me knowing you all the winter and your never mentioning that you were an artist. You ought to adopt the profession—it is a shame not to make the fullest possible use of such talent as yours."

He looked at her in surprise.

"I supposed you knew," he began, then changed the sentence to—"Such share of ability as I may possess I certainly hope to turn to use, and for the best reason in the world."

She understood that he meant he must live by his profession; she had always supposed him rich; he had lived among men who were, and he lived like them.

Perhaps he has lost his money—that would account for his disappearance from Paris; but, of course, she could make no attempt to satisfy her curiosity.

She went on talking of subjects to which the sketch naturally gave rise; he talked, too, while folding up his easel and putting his pictures in the sketch-box; then they walked down the hill together.

Softened by her conviction that he had met

with misfortunes Isabel forgot her odd feeling of irritation towards him and was as agreeable as possible.

Only the next day she met an acquaintance who was able to give her all the information she required.

Old Colonel Laurence always knew everything about everybody, but, unlike the generality of such characters, if there was any good word to be spoken for his friends he never failed to give it utterance.

"Why, Severn is the finest fellow in the world," he said. "He has positive genius, too. He always worked hard, even when he had money, but now that he has been obliged to adopt painting as a profession he is certain to make a great name, and plenty of ingots, also."

"But how does it happen?"

Then Laurence told a little story, which certainly was calculated to raise its hero still higher in the estimation of a woman like Isabel Vaughan.

An elder brother had entered into one of the mining speculations, so ripe in our day; the whole thing had proved as empty, dishonest a bubble as ever drew men on to ruin.

How far George Severn had been a dupe, how far a rascal, it was difficult to discover, more deceived than deceiving probably, since he had trusted his confederates sufficiently to let himself be put so prominently forward, that when the crash came he was, in appearance, the principal villain.

He must have been a weak man, for he blew his brains out to escape the consequences of his folly or sin.

Scores of unfortunates would suffer—women be brought to poverty; children made beggars. Henry Severn was very wealthy, having been the heir of a rich uncle.

He made a vow beside his wretched brother's corpse, and kept it—a pledge, which perhaps to many would have seemed uncalled for and Quixotic in the extreme, but not to a woman like Isabel Vaughan.

He employed his wealth to atone for his brother's wrongdoing and set right the innocent sufferers.

Out of his fortune there remained an income so small that it could do little more than provide him with a roof over his head and money to go on with the profession for which he had already shown such talent, and which he loved and honoured.

"I knew," Isabel Vaughan said to herself, when she sat alone, thinking over the story she had heard, "I knew my heart could not have so utterly deceived me when I believed in that man. I do like him, and I am proud of myself that I can."

There passed several very quiet, pleasant weeks; in looking back over the years Isabel could remember no season so tranquil; no time when she had been so free from tormenting dreams, vague hopes and wishes; impatience against the emptiness and uselessness of her life, and the thousand forms of discontent, personal, and toward existence, wherewith rich, idle people are wont to find means of planting thorns among their rose leaves.

Colonel Laurence remained at Morteville, and it was, in a great measure, owing to his quiet manoeuvres that the young couple found themselves daily thrown together.

Isabel was an exceedingly good draughts-woman, with a sufficient eye for colour; the colonel insisted that she should not neglect this season of leisure and the pretty scenery; besides, he needed exercise—he was growing fat—and so they fell into the habit of accompanying Severn on his artistic expeditions, and very charming days they spent, though I would not swear but what the painter's work went somewhat to the wall in the course of their pilgrimages—so little thought, that neither he nor Isabel were conscious of the fact, and the old colonel—whose eyes were sharper than needles—held his peace and looked as inscrutable as an Egyptian sphinx.

Such pleasant days as it is a rent to think upon! Excursions into the depths of great

forests, where the solemn old trees seemed whispering of secrets that belonged to bygone centuries; sails down the picturesque coast to ancient villages and ruins; pic-nics under the shadow of some mediæval tower, and rambles along the sea-shore.

The weeks passed—the autumn was at hand. Isabel Vaughan woke suddenly out of her summer dream, and comprehended its entire significance.

She loved this minister of art, this modern Quixote, with his dreamy eyes and enchanted tongue—Chrysostom, as the colonel used to call him.

Yes, she loved him, though she had not known it while the golden days were floating by, each lulling her deeper into the repose of her heavenly dream.

She had not thought at all—had just drifted on, content to let the days take their course, each sunny hour filled with its own content.

She loved him, and she knew it!

The knowledge came suddenly—so suddenly, indeed, that she was frightened, though even her vague terror held a keen happiness.

But Henry Severn decided to leave. It was the announcement of his departure, made abruptly, that roused Isabel, and set the whole truth before her eyes.

She loved him, and he was going away—going as calmly as if these weeks had been nothing more to him than any common summer days.

She heard as one in a daze—was able to talk—to laugh—to appear like her ordinary self—until she found the relief of solitude. She was alone at last—the little world—friends—all shut out—then the warfare commenced.

She grew afraid and ashamed of herself; she had not thought that her great pride could have so utterly failed, and allowed her to reach this bitter climax—the knowledge that she had given her heart to a man who had offered nothing in return.

Yet, this did not seem true—roused to justify her weakness in her own eyes—as she looked back over the past weeks, it did not seem true.

But if he loved her how could he go and not speak? How could he leave her, at least without an effort to make his cause good, if so be that her conduct had left him uncertain!—at least, it was much to be able to think that; however deeply she was humiliated in her own eyes he had not read the truth!

It was quite late in the evening; she had been alone for hours; the silence of the house oppressed her; she wanted the relief of the free air and movement.

She wrapped a light shawl about her and went out upon the sands. She met no one; the gay people were at the Assembly Rooms; more sober people were in bed and asleep.

She wandered on and found herself near a summer-house, which she entered and sat down, weary of the yellow moonlight, which lay broad and full upon the beach.

She was roused, suddenly, by the sound of voices, just below her retreat—those of Severn and Colonel Laurence.

Before she could move she heard words which rendered it impossible for her to make her presence known to them.

She could not stir because the echo of her footsteps on the pebbles would have betrayed her; besides that, I think she would have been more than human, if she could, in her present state of mind, have voluntarily gone out of the hearing of that conversation after those first words which struck her ear.

The words were spoken by Colonel Laurence, and they were these:

"The truth is, you are in love with Isabel Vaughan. That is the reason you are going, so you need not hunt for excuses."

"I do not mean to," returned Severn; "I am not ashamed! I honour myself therefore—I do love her."

"And yet you are going away?"

"Yes, I am."

"Of all aggravating animals," cried the

colonel, "Severn, you're an idiot—I repeat it—an idiot."

"Maybe I am."

"First, you give away your money without rhyme or reason, not but what it was a splendid thing to do—"

"Never mind that; I only did what right demanded."

"So be it! But right does not demand that you should break your heart. You love this woman—and a rare creature she is! At least I would be too courageous to go till I had tried my fate."

"And rank among the men who crowd about her? Look at those fellows—a dozen, at least—who have come here for no reason except to try and win her money."

"But she might have eyes to see the difference between you and them."

"Not when I put myself on their level. We have been good friends. She has enjoyed these weeks, just because she believed she could trust to my friendship. Life, naturally enough, has made her suspicious."

"She must perceive that you love her?"

"I think not; I have carefully guarded every word and look. It is only an old lynx like you who would have discovered my secret."

"Well, I say I would not go till I had told my story."

"And I say I will not risk losing the place I hold in her esteem. She likes me now, but if I were to go to her with the old tale she has heard till she is weary of it, she would say to herself:

"She is like all the rest—he wants my money."

"I believe the woman likes you—"

"Only as a friend; I have no reason to think more."

"Now, see here, Severn; the truth is, your confounded pride stands in the way! You won't ask her to marry you because she has a fortune."

"I admit that, even loving her as I do, it would be difficult for me to see our positions reversed—always supposing that she cared for me."

"You're a goose!"

"Maybe so, but I cannot change my feelings. I cannot bear the idea of being a pensioner on any woman's bounty—of having her, if troubles come after, to think it was the money I had wanted."

"Suppose you had married her and somebody had left her the money afterward. I conclude that, mad as you are, you would not have sued for a divorce on these grounds—you would have been obliged to be rich in spite of yourself."

"That would have been a very different case."

"Not a bit, as I look at the matter, since you love her, and I am pretty sure that she is not indifferent towards you."

"I cannot suppose such a thing," said Severn. "I would not."

And his voice trembled a little.

"I can only say one thing: I will not put myself in a position, so that any woman can imagine I was trying to get her fortune. If I preserve nothing else I will keep my independence, even though I break my own heart to do it."

"Don Quixote! I don't believe you love her—I don't believe you could love any woman—you are ice—stone!"

"Heaven knows it might make matters easier for me if I were," Severn answered. "See here, old friend, I speak to you as I could not to any other human being—I trust you even not to betray my secret by so much as a hint even to Isa—to the lady herself."

"No, I cannot, though I own I should like to. You made me give my promise in an unguarded moment, and I shall keep it—but I never hated more to mind my own business."

"I assure you no good and much harm might result from any interference."

"Well, well, I say I don't mean to interfere! As for your loving—I don't believe in the possibility—you are a block of stone."

"Heaven knows I wish I were! No, I love her, and you believe me, though you pretend to

doubt. I think I loved her from the first moment I set eyes on her! Ah, me, I had some happy weeks—yes, I had! I should have told my story—I should have done the best I could for myself, though I am by no means certain I should have succeeded."

"Never mind being modest."

"No, there is not much use," he said, with an odd, choked laugh, which held slight merriment. "Then came that dreadful news, and I hurried away to England."

"And a pretty work you did there," grumbled his mentor.

"I could have done no less—you are the last man in the world to have bidden me do otherwise! At least I righted my poor brother's name; more than that, I saved from suffering the innocent and helpless. As for my own life—my future—ah, well, I am young, strong—I can work, and a little pain, more or less, is not of much consequence."

He walked rapidly away, and Colonel Laurence followed in silence.

Isabel Vaughan still sat in the summer-house and gazed out at the glorious sky, and fell, as if she had been suddenly lifted far above the common earth, into a world so beautiful that her wildest dreams had never pictured its equal.

The next day Severn came to make her his farewell visit. Colonel Laurence was there when he entered.

A couple of other guests were in the room also, but they took their leave almost immediately, though the colonel lingered for some time.

All the society portion of Morteville—that little wandering segment of the world of fashion—knew that Prince Della Nera, one of the handsomest men of the day, and renowned for romantic adventures, dear to the feminine heart, had come thither, a short time before, and laid his heart (such as could be supposed left of it) and his dozen titles at the feet of Isabel Vaughan—for her own sake, or the sake of her thousands—or perhaps, motives in which both had a part.

At all events he offered himself and his advantages and was refused—absolutely refused. All the world knew that, too, for his astonishment at the catastrophe had been so excessive that he could not keep his own secret.

With an apparent want of tact, such as he would have condemned as a positive crime in another, Colonel Laurence, in Severn's very presence, rallied Mrs. Vaughan upon the occurrence; described the prince's manner of relating the affair; asked what in the name of goodness she expected life to offer her; and made himself very disagreeable, at least, according to Severn's idea, though Isabel bore his railery with perfect good humour, and listened to his animadversions upon her conduct with exemplary patience.

Finally, the colonel rose somewhat abruptly and took his departure, leaving the young pair together.

There was a brief silence between them. Severn could not bear to tear himself away, yet it was very difficult to find a subject of conversation upon which he could talk with fitting composure.

Isabel roused herself out of a little reverie into which she appeared to have been thrown by the old bachelor's parting words.

"I wonder," she said, suddenly; "I do wonder what those people, the colonel calls my adorers, would say if they knew that I lose this much talked of and very tiresome fortune if I were to marry."

Severn turned white—turned red—then white again, and stared at her with wide-open eyes, scarcely able to believe that he had heard her words aright.

"I imagine I should be left in profound peace if that fact were published. Sometimes I have three minds to let it be known," continued Isabel, changing colour as rapidly as her listener, though she pretended to be playing with her fan, and to be perfectly at her ease.

The next instant Severn was standing before

her. He had caught her hands in his and was saying, rapidly:

"I meant to go away without telling my secret. I cannot now! I love you! I would not open my lips when it was possible that my motives could be misconceived—but I can let my heart speak now—I love you! I love you!"

She sank back in her chair and turned away her head, trying to draw her hands out of his.

"Oh, forgive me!" he exclaimed. "I have no right to speak—I am bold, presumptuous—but I love you so entirely that sometimes I have been mad enough to think it was not possible my heart could have gone out so wholly toward you without meeting some return."

She did not look at him, but she left her hands in his.

She was listening—he could see that, and it gave him renewed courage.

"See," he went on, "I am not so mad as to expect you to relinquish wealth and luxury just for my love—but if you could give me a hope to brighten my life! I will work as no man ever did—I will win position and wealth—oh, Isabel, only tell me that I am not indifferent to you."

She looked at him now. She was very pale, but a beautiful smile wreathed her lips and softened her eyes.

"I shall not tell you that you are indifferent to me," she said, in a low voice.

"Then I can have courage? If I can only know that when I come back—"

"I do not wish you to go," she interrupted, half laughing, half crying. "You have some money—I should have some—I am not afraid—I—oh, do you mean to make me offer myself to you, after all?"

They were married only six weeks later. It had been decided between them that they were to live in Rome, but they travelled for awhile after the wedding, and it was winter before they reached the grand old city which was to be their home.

"I have an apartment there," Isabel had said; "it is ready to live in, so we may as well keep it."

And Severn consented, without giving the matter much thought.

So their journeyings ended. They reached Rome.

The "apartment" proved to be a stately old palace, gorgeously furnished, with a wonderful studio therein.

"But how comes it that you have this left?" Severn asked. "And—forgive me—it is too fine for us."

"I don't see why," she answered, calmly. "My dearest life, a palace! Think of the household it involves! You know I am poor, and your fortune is gone—"

"My fortune gone!" she interrupted. "I never told you so!"

"But you said—"

"That I wondered what my lovers would say if they found it must go in case I married. Oh, Henry! can't you forgive my being rich?"

I think on the whole he did; but any way, since then, he has become one of the most famous painters of our day, and has made so large a fortune of his own that he need not disquiet himself in regard to hers.

F. L. D.

FACETIÆ.

ROBINS IN THE WRONG PLACE.

At a swell wedding in the Hunting Metropolis, we read of eleven bridesmaids in white cashmere polonaises, trimmed with holly mistletoe, and robin red-breasts—dead robin red-breasts!!

Since the time that kindly bird covered the babes in the wood with leaves, even schoolboys' blood-thirstiness and roughs' recklessness have spared the robin—the bright-eyed, fearless friend of man—the sweet little singer of winter.

It was reserved for these eleven dainty brides-

maids—or rather, let us hope, for her who, without their cognisance or consent, planned their trimmings—to rise superior to the piety which spares the "little bird with bosom red."

May the spirits of the slain robins not sit, like the slain albatross on the conscience of the Ancient Mariner, on the souls of those eleven bridesmaids.

But we should like to give a trimming of our own to the unwomanly woman who devised this cruel accompaniment of the holly and mistletoe, emblems of kindness, good-will on earth, and innocent kisses.

—Punch.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

(Muffins has had a day with the 'ounds on the old 'oss as runs the bread cart.)

KEEPER: "Good sport, guv'nor?"

MUFFINS: "Capital!"

KEEPER: "Killed?"

MUFFINS (thinking with pride of his own hair-breadth escapes): "No, by George; precious near, though."

KEEPER (thinking of his pheasants): "Ah! bad job that; we's well nigh overrun wi' sich varmin' herabouts."

(Muffins is perplexed.)

—Judy.

MORE ENGINE-DRIFT.

WE hear, as an instance of the tremendous labour and organisation involved in the production of even so frivolous a thing as a pantomime, that at "Old Drury" all the scenes are shifted by means of a donkey-engine. Thus intellect triumphs over brute force, science supersedes mere manual labour, and now even the scene-shifter acknowledges the superiority of brayin' power!

—Judy.

AN OLD TERM WITH A NEW MEANING.

ARMISTICE—An arrangement the observation of which is optional, and by which a successful belligerent is enabled to take advantage of his less fortunate and less cunning adversary, who may be imbued with a higher sense of honour as regards a flag of truce.

—Judy.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

NEWS BOY: "Truth, miss?"

YOUNG LADY: "Oh, I don't care for 'Truth!' Give me the 'World.'"

—Judy.

BY A STEAM FELLER.

MR. GLADSTONE once remarked to a very great man, "It is more considerate to fell trees in summer than in winter. In summer you fell them with their leaves, in winter you have to fell them without."

—Fun.

NATURAL HISTORY.

ANIMALS lick each other from motives of affection. The reverse is generally the case with man.

—Fun.

A RANDOM SHOT.

DID the finding of twenty-five Krupp guns at Nish by the Servians prove that there had been anything in the way of Krupp practices among the Prussian neutrals?

—Fun.

JENNEROUS.

A DISINTERESTED person is anxious to know whether the discoverer of the vaccine lymph was really a blessing to his Jenneration. N.B.—This is not a conundrum.

—Fun.

THE SAXON OPPRESSOR.

SAXON TOURIST: "I suppose the English buy all the pigs that you wish to sell?"

IRISH PEASANT: "They do. Bad luck to 'em, the toirants!"

—Punch.

MOST CIVIL!

POLITE LITTLE GIRL (who, with her nurse, brother, and sisters, has been shown over a small cocoa-nut matting factory): "Thank you so very much for your kindness!"

THIRSTY WORKMAN: "Quite welcome, miss! We should like to drink your 'ealths, miss!'"

P. L. G.: "Oh, thank you! That is very kind of you! We shall be delighted! Good afternoon!"

—Punch.

THERE are seventeen shades of green now in

demand for ladies' dresses. In fact, there is only one prevalent green that is not popular, and that is the gan-grene. —London Figaro.

From the reply which certain of the European Powers have made to the Ottoman Circular, they have evidently mistaken it for a circular Ottoman; something to be sat upon. —Fun.

EXPENSIVE LUXURY.

(Scene—A wood, where an unmistakable "Bagman" has been chopped.)

KEEPER: "You'll send me my card, authorising keeper's fee on 'a find.'"

HUNTSMAN: "Not good enough for that!"

KEEPER: "Not good enough! Why, he cost fifty shillings!" —Punch.

BRITISH INTERESTS.—In anything but Turkish Coupons. —Punch.

A DOCTOR'S COUNTER-IRRITANT.—The prescribing chemist. —Punch.

A NEAT REMINDER.

AFFABLE OLD GENT (who has just paid, but inadvertently forgotten the usual douceur): "Not much business doing just now, appar'tly."

WAITER (severely): "No, sir. 'Seems to me that all the gentlemen have left town'!" (Old gent recoils himself.) —Punch.

PAINTING IN BLACK AND WHITE.

GOVERNMENT by Public Opinion: When the country moves as I blow the trumpet.

Government by Agitation: When the country moves as somebody else blows the trumpet. —Punch.

SECOND edition of the "Telegraph"—The Telephone. —Punch.

ALTERING THE COMPLEXION.

BILL: "I say, Mary, run and ask Jule to come and play with us."

MARY: "You know, Bill, mother says you ain't to call him Jule,—his name's Jul-ius."

BILL: "Well, what does she call me Bill for, then? I shan't call him Jul-ius until she calls me Bill-ious." —Fun.

A HEARTY JOKE.

SPEAKING of the war agitation the other day, an orator exclaimed, "I know on which side every true born Englishman's heart is." We are loth to be unpatriotic, but cannot help reminding the gentleman that, if an Englishman's heart was on the right side he wouldn't be true born. —Fun.

QUITE THE HISTORICAL CHEESE.

ENQUIRING MIND: "Auntie, dear, what became of Romulus and Repus?"

PRECOCIUS TOM: "I know, I know. They were smothered in the Tower by order of that wicked Duke of Double Gloucester." —Fun.

INREDIBLE OBSTINACY.

GOVERNNESS: "Well, Johnny, where is your copy?"

JOHNNY: "Got no ink. Swallowed the ink."

GOVERNNESS: "Swallowed the ink! What in the world did you do that for?"

JOHNNY: "Well, you see, I wasn't going to let it master me altogether!" —Fun.

RATHER ROUGHSHOD.

LITTLE SNOB (loudly): "Whose 'orses are these, my man?"

SWELL GEDOOM (who does not approve of liberties): "Yours, sir!"

L. S.: "Mine! wot d'yer mean?"

S. G.: "Why, sir, if I'm your man, these must be your 'orses!"

(Collapse of Little Snob.) —Fun.

ON FALSE PRETENCES.

WHEN Mrs. Crawshaw started her plan of "Lady Helps," the last thing probably that she thought of was providing a mask for meanness, anxious to shirk a fair day's wages for a fair day's work.

But this is what the name, and any inducement it may hold out to youth and inexperience, are being used for, if we may judge by this advertisement from a daily paper:

WANTED, a LADY HELP, on Jan. 3; salary £10. Suitable for an Orphan wishing to find a home. Must be able to walk out with and teach young children; an early riser, able to attend to wardrobes, very cheerful, and steady.—Address, &c.

What a cheerful look-out for the "orphan wishing to find a home!" —Punch.

STATISTICS.

PRODUCE OF CUSTOMS DUTIES.—The official return for the year 1877 shows that the Customs duties produce less than 20 millions sterling, the amount being upwards of £300,000 below that for the preceding year. It is true that the tobacco duty brought in more than eight millions, showing an increase of nearly £243,000, and the £3,781,900 obtained from tea gives an increase of £53,579. But the £5,510,140 produced from foreign and colonial spirits imported into this country shows a decrease of more than £450,000, the £1,659,939 from imported wine a decrease of £104,000, and the £478,955 from dried fruits a decrease of £56,000. The duty paid on coffee showed a small increase in 1876, but in 1877 the produce was only £205,272, which is a decrease of £3,000.

MAIDEN, WIFE AND MOTHER.

LITTLE maid with laughing eyes,
Chasing golden butterflies,
Tripping through the clover blooms,
Shaking out their rich perfumes,
From sweet morn to still of night
Thou art drinking earth's delight.

Unto me thou art as fair
As the brightest blossoms are;
White as lily is thy heart,
Pink as rose thy blushes start,
While the soft blue of thine eye
Matches well the violet shy.

Fleet thou art as bird on wing,
Sweet as wood-lark dost thou sing.
Clear thy happy laughter rings
As the silver gush of springs;
All that fair or bright I see
Are but types, sweet child, of thee.

With a beauty higher far,
With a glory like a star,
Do I see thee, maiden, now,
Taking on this wifhood's vow,
Bridal buds are not more white
Than thy soul in love's sweet light!

Golden crown of all hast thou,
Mother with the patient brow!
Hearts that little children press,
Gain a wealth of tenderness,
In thy yearning mother-love,
Type I see of that above. M. A. K.

GEMS.

TRUE.—The most fascinating women are those who can most enrich the everyday movements of existence. They are those who can partake of our pleasures and our pains in the liveliest and most devoted manner. Beauty is but little without this; with it she is indeed triumphant.

THOUGHT.—There is a singular fascination in the sudden suggestion and almost visible development of a thought. An idea passes from one mind to another like a child in a story book among its fairy godmothers, receiving a new grace and gift from each.

SMILES.—A beautiful smile is to the female countenance what the sunbeam is to the landscape; it embellishes an inferior face, and redeems an ugly one. A smile, however, should not become habitual, or insipidity is the result.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LEMONADE.—Peel a fine lemon as thinly as possible, and let the peel lie for half an hour in a quart of cold filtered water; then add the strained juice of the lemon, remove the peel, and sweeten to taste with lump sugar. Capillaire, or simple syrup, is very good for sweetening all invalid drinks, and is useful for a variety of purposes. To make it, take a pound of the finest loaf sugar, and drop it in four lumps at a time into a pint and a half of boiling water: let it boil gently, removing every particle of scum as it rises, until it begins to thicken and assumes a golden tinge. When finished, it should be perfectly bright and clear, and if well made will last a long time. It should be put away in small bottles and be well corked. Provision should be made in families for supplying lemonade at any moment. This may be done by putting the peel of lemons when cheap into a bottle, and covering them with gin, draining away the liquor when it has stood a month, and bottling it. This can be used to flavour lemonade with citric acid, which is perfectly wholesome. A syrup can be made of the juice of the lemons thus: Add half a pint of strained juice to a pint of capillaire made as directed above, and allow both to boil together for an hour. If care is taken to remove all scum as it rises, the syrup will be clear and bright. Put away in small bottles closely corked, and it will keep for years. A little of this syrup, with a few drops of the extract of lemon peel, makes a delicious and refreshing drink.

LEMON PUDDING.—Beat well together four ounces of butter to a cream, and eight ounces of sifted sugar; to these add gradually the yolks of six and the whites of two eggs, with the grated rind and strained juice of a large lemon. This last must be added by slow degrees, and stirred briskly to the other ingredients. Bake the pudding in a dish lined with very thin puff-paste for three-quarters of an hour, in a slow oven.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Phonograph, or Mr. Edison's telephone, will, it is said, give sounds sufficiently powerful to be heard at a distance of more than 150 feet.

ACCORDING to a General Order, the regulations regarding the examination of officers who may be candidates for admission to the Staff College in February, 1879, will be the same as those issued in January, 1877, except that the subjects of examination in Military History, &c., will be those mentioned in General Order, No. 59, 1877.

A NEW kind of cloth will soon find its way into the market, made of feathers from fowls and other birds generally. It is stated to be lighter and warmer than woollen cloth, to be waterproof, and capable of being dyed beautifully and at little expense.

HER MAJESTY has conferred upon the King of Italy the Order of the Garter, which his Majesty has accepted, with warm expressions of gratification at the honour bestowed upon him by the Queen.

MR. FORSYTH, one of the members for Marylebone, intends to support the ladies' rights by moving the rejection of Mr. Herschell's Bill to abolish actions for breach of promise of marriage.

A NUMBER of special officers are to be employed to assist the Surveyor of Taxes in ascertaining the number of dogs chargeable with the tax. They may institute a house-to-house visitation.

THE King of Italy engages to settle his father's liabilities—36,000,000 lire—out of his own private means. He will sell Castel Porziano, a vast hunting estate bought by the nation as a present to Victor Emmanuel. All the King's acts hitherto have been prompted by wisdom and generous self-denial.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ROBERT W. T.—Yes, there is a fish called the torpedo, but it is not, as you suppose, the electric eel, though electrical phenomena are connected with it. The torpedo is to be found in most waters, but the largest specimens have been discovered in the Mediterranean. Usually its length ranges from eighteen inches to two feet, but sometimes very much larger ones have been taken. Its body is somewhat circular, perfectly smooth, slightly convex above, and marked along each side of the spine by several small spores or foramina. The colour of the upper surface is commonly a pale, reddish brown, sometimes diversified by five large equidistant circular dusky spots with pale centres; the under surface is whitish or flesh-coloured. Contact with the torpedo produces a numbness or painful sensation, but its galvanic or electric powers are said to be less powerful than those exerted by the gymnotus (electric eel).

ELIZA.—The MSS. should be written on ruled white paper, with the best black ink.

J. M.—"Mother Bunch" was an alchouse keeper who formed the subject of a book, formerly very popular, entitled "Mother Bunch's closet newly broken open, containing Rare Secrets of Art and Nature, tried and experimented by Learned Philosophers, and recommended to all Ingenious young Men and Maids, teaching them, in a Natural Way, how to get Good Wives and Husbands. By a Lover of Mirth and Hater of Treason." (London, 12 mo, 1760.) There are in this quaint old work many curious receipts and specifics concerning love-matters, and we suppose that the phrase "One of Mother Bunch's Daughters" may be taken as intended to apply to an individual supposed to be endowed with qualifications similar to those attributed to "Mother Bunch."

INQUIRER.—The name Copperheads was applied to a section of the Northern party supposed to be in secret sympathy with the Southerners during the American Civil War, obstructing the Government of the day and affording such other assistance as was possible to the "Rebels." The title originated in the fact that there is a serpent to be found principally in Florida, called the copperhead (Trigonoccephalus contortrix); its bite is considered to be as venomous as that of the rattlesnake, but, unlike the latter, it gives no warning of its approach, and is therefore considered as the type of a concealed foe.

Q. K.—The etiquette is for the lady to accost the gentleman first.

CONSTANT READER.—Mazepa was the son of a Polish gentleman in Podolia, who became page at the court of John Casimir, King of Poland. An intrigue, the particulars of which are matters of doubt, brought upon him the punishment of being bound to a wild horse. He was thus carried away among the Cossacks, who treated him well, and, after having been secretary and adjutant to the "hetman" Samoilovitch, he, on the death of his patron, became hetman himself. He became a favourite with Peter the Great, but in consequence of the Russian oppression of the Poles he returned to and fought for his native country. Mazepa was born in 1645 and died in Bender, Turkey, in 1709.

PARIS.—L. "Der Freischütz" means "the free shooter." Weber composed an opera in 1821 bearing this name, but the story (adapted by F. Kind) appeared originally in a poetic form in a Ghostbook (Apel's "Gespenserbuch") published in 1810. Der Freischütz was a legendary hunter who made a compact with the Prince of Darkness, procuring thereby seven balls, six of which should infallibly hit their mark, however great the distance, but the seventh was reserved by his Satanic majesty to be directed at his pleasure. 2. Refer to a German-English dictionary. 3. Clematis lanuginosa is a deciduous climber, flowering in July; hardy kinds grow in any common garden soil. The varieties of iris are too numerous to mention. Any light, rich soil is suitable for fuchsias. Your questions are too numerous to answer further in detail. See announcements on the third column of this page respecting back numbers of THE LONDON READER.

TERABORE.—Certainly. You occupy your father's position precisely with respect to the property.

J. S.—Your husband should make a will in your favour. Should he die intestate only a moiety of his personal property would devolve upon you—the rest would go in equal shares to "greedy" mother and brothers.

K. M.—No one can tell your fortune or fathom your destiny.

W. W.—Your safest and surest relief is in work. Keep yourself constantly employed and your moping will soon leave you.

W. B. and J. O. would like to correspond with two young ladies. W. B. is twenty-one, medium height, dark hair and eyes. J. O. is twenty, tall, dark hair, blue eyes.

EDWARD, nineteen, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady.

ETHEL and MYRTLE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen. Ethel is nineteen, loving, dark. Myrtle is eighteen, medium height, light hair, dark eyes.

LARA, nineteen, tall, fair, light blue eyes, fond of home, would like to correspond with a gentleman, not above twenty-four.

ROSE and EVELYN would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-four. Rose is twenty-one, medium height, dark. Evelyn is twenty, fair, blue eyes, domesticated.

LOWEY GRACE would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-eight. She is twenty-five, brown hair, of a loving disposition, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home.

JAMES P. Y. and WILLIAM C., two friends, wish to correspond with two ladies. James P. Y. is twenty-six, dark hair, grey eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children. William C. is of a loving disposition, fair hair, blue eyes.

WILLIAM, a seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home and music, good-looking, wishes to correspond with a young lady. Must be about twenty.

V. G. and E. C., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. V. G. is nineteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes. E. C. is twenty, dark hair, medium height, fond of home, tall.

HETTY and MARY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Hetty is twenty-one, brown hair, grey eyes, tall. Mary is twenty-two, tall, fair, fond of music.

ADELIN and DAISY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Adeline is twenty-two, hazel eyes, fond of music, fair, thoroughly domesticated. Daisy is twenty-one, light hair, blue eyes, medium height, good-tempered, and loving.

COME, LET US ROVE THE FOREST GLADE.

Come, let us rove the forest glade,
And happy we must feel,
Where summer flowers within the shade
Their beauties would conceal;
We'll walk along the streamlet's side
And listen to its lay,
While quiet contented it does glide
Upon its pebbly way.

We'll sit upon some flowery knoll
That's hid from searching eyes,
And when we're sitting arm-in-arm
I'll speak the thoughts that rise
Within my heart that burn for thee,
That long I've guarded well;
I'll sing a song of love to thee,
And little secrets tell.

I'll sing of happier days to come
When both our hearts are twined
Around each other, with a home
Of love and peace combined;
So let us to the forest glade
Contented wend our way,
And while birds sing their tales of love
I'll echo all they say.

S. B. N.

C. G., K. L., and B. F., three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies. C. G. is twenty-two, handsome, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing. K. L. is twenty, brown hair, hazel eyes, fair. B. F. is twenty-one, loving, dark hair, blue eyes, and tall. Respondents must be between seventeen and twenty, good-looking.

CLARICE, eighteen, medium height, tall, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman. Respondent must be about twenty, good-looking, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home, and medium height.

CLARE and POLLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Clare is seventeen, brown hair, dark eyes, good-looking, fond of home, music, and dancing, and thoroughly domesticated. Polly is eighteen, dark hair, blue eyes, good-looking. Respondents must be between seventeen and twenty, brown hair and eyes, fair, and of loving dispositions.

ALF, twenty, a seaman in the Royal Navy, good-looking, of a loving disposition, medium height, would like to correspond with a lady about the same age, and tall.

M. F., twenty-two, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty, brown hair and eyes.

ROBERTO, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady. He is eighteen, good-tempered.

MARY and MILLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Mary is twenty-one, dark, blue eyes, fond of home. Milly is twenty-two, dark, hazel eyes. Respondents must be twenty-three.

F. M. and G. C., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. F. M. is twenty-three, tall, light curly hair, dark eyes. G. C. is twenty-four, medium height.

D. G. G., twenty-eight, good-looking, fair, auburn hair, hazel eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a tall young lady with a view to matrimony, about twenty-four, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of children.

F. A. D., twenty-six, medium height, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady. Must be about twenty-four, brown hair and eyes, good-looking.

LILY and STELLA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty-two, tall, fair, of a loving disposition. Stella is fair, medium height, fond of home and dancing.

O. V. and M. G., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. O. V. is twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes. M. G. is nineteen, brown hair, blue eyes. Respondents must be tall, fair, of loving dispositions, fond of children.

W. L., twenty-two, dark hair, grey eyes, and fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-one.

NINA and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Nina is nineteen, medium height, dark curly hair, and grey eyes. Annie is eighteen, auburn hair, brown eyes, considered good-looking, fond of music.

O. L. and B. T., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. O. L. is twenty, tall, light brown hair and eyes, fair, fond of home. B. T. is twenty-one, brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated, medium height, dark.

D. K. D. and C. K., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. D. K. D. is twenty-two, medium height, dark brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home. C. K. is twenty-one, dark brown hair and eyes, medium height, fond of home.

TEDDY, twenty, fair, good-looking, tall, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, medium height, good-looking, dark, and fond of children.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

ELEVATING AIMS is responded to by—Mary, twenty-three fair, tall.

G. E. W. by—Lissie, thirty, dark, medium height, of a loving disposition.

HERACLES L. by—Jessie H.

MARY by—L. A., twenty-two, tall, dark brown hair, fond of home.

J. P. by—Anna, seventeen, dark brown hair, dark eyes, fond of home and dancing.

L. D. by—Ramsay, eighteen, brown hair, grey eyes, fond of home and music.

NELLIE by—William Edwin, twenty.

AGNES by—Edward, eighteen, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes.

D. G. by—Edward, nineteen, fair, considered good-looking, fond of music.

E. E. by—F. F. C., twenty-two, tall, fair, and fond of children.

CLAUDIA by—Edith A. W., eighteen, medium height, and dark.

W. P. N. by—L. W., twenty, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition.

J. M. by—W. A. H.

T. B. by—Kate, fair, blue eyes.

A. C. by—Julia, dark, brown eyes.

W. J. D. by—Edith, twenty-one.

C. D. by—Marie, twenty.

HENRY by—William B.

JACK by—Belle, seventeen, light hair, blue eyes, fond of dancing.

JOHNAT by—Ada, seventeen, brown hair and eyes, and medium height.

CHRIS by—L. E., twenty-four, brown hair, blue eyes, medium height.

G. R. by—F. E., eighteen, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home.

GERTRUDE by—Frank O., twenty-nine.

C. by—B. E. A., twenty, medium height, fair, brown hair.

ALFRED by—Daisy, seventeen, golden hair, hazel eyes, fond of music.

KATE by—Tom.

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